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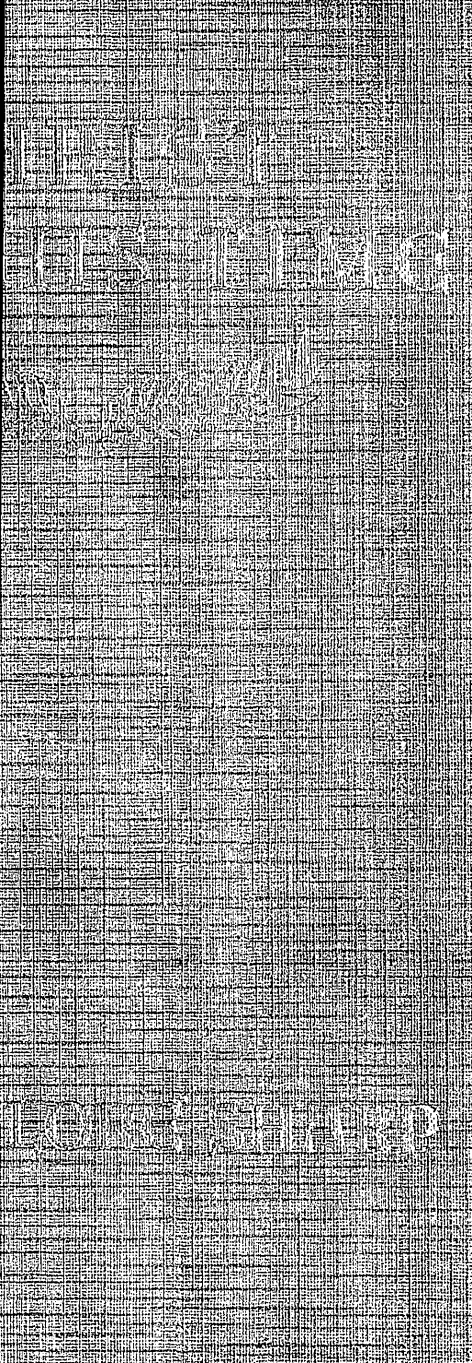
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CHRIST AND HIS TIME

ROMANCES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT





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Dallas Lore Sharp



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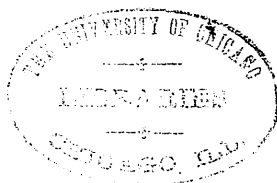
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TO

HIS FRIEND

LEWIS OLIVER HARTMAN

TO WHOM THE AUTHOR ONCE WROTE

“ . . . THERE IS MORE IN LOVE THAN IN DOCTRINE.”

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CHAPTER I

Annunciation

AS the dawn faintly kindled on the summit of distant Hermon, then burst into flame from the highest pinnacle of the Temple, the priests, with a threefold blast of silver trumpets, woke Jerusalem to the life of a new day.

It was an October day, in the year 748 from the building of Rome, or toward the close of the sixth year before the Christian era. The course of Abia officiated this day in the Temple. The priests, according to the ancient order established by David, were divided into twenty-four courses, or relays, and each course was on duty in the Temple, a week at a time, twice a year. Abia was the name of the eighth of these courses, whose duties fell this year in April and October.

The trumpet blast at daybreak was the signal for morning worship. All was ready in the Temple; the lots were cast to mark those of the priests who were to take part in the sacrifice itself; the courts inspected; the gates swung open; the lamb led out and placed in mystic fashion on the altar; the Holy Place made ready for the incense offering; and now priests and people are assembled as the superintending priest sprinkles the sacrificial blood, from the golden bowl, upon the altar.

Once more the lot is cast, to indicate him who is to pass within the Holy Place and make the incense offering—the highest and solemnest part of the day's

services. Among the probably fifty priests about the altar the lot marks Zacharias.

Zacharias was an old man and well known in the Temple. He had the double distinction of being a priest and having for his wife the daughter of a priest. His long life had been spent in the Temple, but the honor of incensing had never fallen to him before. It could come to a priest only once in his lifetime, for it brought him so much nearer the Divine Presence than any other priestly act, and was so fraught with blessing, that everyone was thus given the greatest possible chance to obtain it.

Instead of living in the Ophel quarter in Jerusalem or in Jericho, the other priest center, Zacharias dwelt in a city of Juda, in the hill country, probably at Hebron. Both the priest and his wife Elisabeth were now well stricken in years, and were known by their neighbors as righteous and blameless.

During all these years, however, a cloud had hung over the home of Zacharias, an unsatisfied longing had eaten at his heart, a growing desire had burdened all his prayers—his home was childless.

A deep grief this to the old priest, a bitter reproach to Elisabeth, his wife!

The glowing coals from the burnt sacrifice are spread upon the golden altar that stands before the heavy veil of the Holy of holies, the helping priest withdraws, and Zacharias with the censor is alone within the Holy Place.

The people in the courts have drawn away from the altar and with the priests are prostrate before the Lord. A hush broods over the Temple. It is the hour of prayer. Every devout Jew the world over is kneeling before Jehovah in supplication for the re-

demption of Israel. Zacharias waits before the altar for the signal to spread the incense. It comes, and seeing the offering kindle, the perfume clouds arise that symbol Israel's ascending prayers, he bows in worship and prepares to withdraw, when, suddenly, a shining light fills all the place and a wondrous vision holds him.

On the right side of the altar stands an angel. Fear falls on the priest. The heavenly messenger speaks: "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard." "Thy prayer"—the one long prayer of his life, the one passionate yearning of his heart for a son—is heard! Elisabeth shall bear him a son, whose name the angel says shall be John ("the Lord is gracious"). This is to be no common child, for not only will his parents rejoice at his birth but many shall hear and rejoice. And he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, a Nazarite for life and a prophet and teacher of such power in Israel that to him will be given the great commission of preparing a way and making ready the people for the coming of their Lord.

So long had Zacharias offered his prayer that he now had almost ceased to expect an answer, and, as the angel announces not only the fulfillment of his petitions, but the abounding promises that no father would have dreamed of asking, the old priest's faith entirely fails, and, instead of thanking God, he, doubting, asks a sign that he may believe.

He asks, and receives at once a sign and a punishment for his lack of faith. "Thou shalt be silent and not able to speak until the day that these things shall come to pass." And with this the angel Gabriel vanished.

Meanwhile the people without wondered at the

unusual delay. Their prayers were said and they waited the priest's return, for his benediction and dismissal. Anxiety and fear took possession of them as he lingered longer and longer in the Holy Place. What had happened? Had he approached God unworthily and been struck dead by the Almighty?

At last he comes forth and standing on the top of the steps stretches out his hands to pronounce the benediction. His lips move but the deep silence is unbroken, for he is dumb. He has received the sign, and the people, wondering and awe-struck, disperse.

Six months had not yet passed when the angel once more appeared. He brought the same strange message this time that he brought to Zacharias, only this was still more wonderful.

He came this second time, not in answer to the prayers of one priest, but to the life-long cry of a world. He appeared not in Jerusalem of Judæa in the Holy Place of the Temple, between the golden altar and the seven-branched candlestick, while an aged priest offered incense, but in the little village of despised Nazareth, in the land of Galilee, at the humblest of the homes of the poor, to Mary, the espoused wife of the village carpenter.

Mary was at her parents' home. She was not yet married to Joseph, only betrothed to him. But a betrothal in Galilee was as sacred and its obligations as binding as marriage. It could not be dissolved except by a legal writ of divorce. The betrothal took place in the presence of the maiden's parents, at her home, and since a second ceremony was necessary before actual marriage, breach of the betrothal vows was considered adultery.

Mary was probably fourteen or fifteen years old. It is still the custom in the East to marry at this and even an earlier age, and tradition is unanimous in making the virgin mother young as well as beautiful. But she was poor and a peasant? Yes, but the blood of kings ran in her veins and an eternal kingdom had been promised to her family. Mary was of the royal lineage of David, king of Israel. She was the cousin of Joseph, who was direct descendant of David and the legal heir to his throne. Mary, on her mother's side, could also claim kinship with the priesthood, being a cousin of Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias.

It was in the sacred privacy of her own chamber, at the hour of prayer, that the angel came with the peace-greeting from on high, and with the marvelous revelation of God's great favor and untold blessings for her. In the simplicity of her religious and child-like nature she was not startled by the heavenly visitor. Angels had visited earth before; they had come with tidings from Jehovah, they had come to the help of Israel, and it is not strange that she, who had always lived in the Old Testament atmosphere, should see visions and dream dreams.

But the bright stranger spoke and the dream was no longer a dream. His words filled her heart with awe and dread questioning. "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God," and thus reassuring her, Gabriel tells her that she, among all women, is most blessed, for God, the Father, has chosen her to be the mother of his Son, whose name shall be Jesus. He is to be the Saviour of his people, the promised king of David's line. His the greatness; his the glory; his the kingdom, forever and ever. He is to be the Chosen One of Israel, the long-looked-for Messiah.

She to be the mother of the Messiah! She to be the mother of Him for whom all waited and prayed! In the dawn of her bewildering hope, as the first waves of the great new joy sweep over her, she asks what she shall do. She does not doubt the message of the angel—every woman in Israel cherished a faint hope of the great honor—she only asks, as she accepts the favor, “How?—teach me what to do.”

In familiar words the angel reveals to her the full truth and tells her how God has also blessed Elisabeth, her own kinswoman. In reverent and humble submission Mary joyfully exclaims, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.” And the angel departed from her.

Left alone with her mysterious secret, what should she do? It was too great to be kept. She must have sympathy and advice. There were none in Nazareth in whom she could confide; but had not the angel told her of Elisabeth? Had not the Lord blessed her in like manner? Surely she would understand; and to her she could open her heart. She determines to visit Elisabeth, and with haste departs for Hebron, nearly a hundred miles to the south—a long and dangerous journey for a maiden, who, being poor, perhaps traveled every mile of the way on foot. But her exalted spirit carries her along until she and Elisabeth meet, when her fervor breaks forth in one of the loftiest and grandest of hymns.

Mary lingered at Hebron nearly three months. Soon the joyful event would take place in the priest's home and Mary must now return to Nazareth. We can understand the dread with which she thought of breaking the news of her condition to her parents, and especially to her betrothed. She was conscious

of her own purity, but she feared, and not without reason, that they would not understand. Joseph was a just man and was troubled at her words. He would not make a public example of her, but "was minded to put her away privily." While he hesitates between hope and fear, the truth is made plain to him in a dream. He hesitates no longer, but, conscious of his duty, immediately takes Mary as his wife.

But now there is great rejoicing in the far-off hills of Hebron. The promise is fulfilled and to Zacharias and Elisabeth a boy is born. It was at the circumcision on the eighth day—the day of days in a Jewish household—that the child received his name. During the closing prayer of the ceremony, in which the name was inserted, the priest called him Zacharias, after his father, but Elisabeth interrupts the prayer and says, "Not Zacharias, but John."

For explanation, they turn to the father, who, calling for a slate, writes, "John." With astonishment they read the name; and when, as the word is written, the father's tongue is loosed and he breaks forth in praises to God, they are struck with fear. Now they depart to their own homes and spread the strange news abroad until all in the hill country have heard.

It was in April that Mary visited Elisabeth. Now winter was come, and one day in December, Mary, in company with Joseph, again starts from Nazareth on a long journey—to Bethlehem.

The occasion for this winter pilgrimage is far different from that which took her along these roads in spring on her way to Hebron. Then she was carried

along by a wondrous secret in her heart; now she is driven forth by mandates of a hated foreign ruler.

Cæsar Augustus had sent forth a decree from Rome "that all the world should be enrolled," and it is in answer to this summons, given to Herod or some Roman governor of Syria to execute, that Joseph and Mary are making their way to Bethlehem.

Palestine had paid tribute to Rome ever since Pompey encamped on the hills around Jerusalem, and though Herod was now king over the country, he was king only at the pleasure of Augustus, and a mere vassal to the Roman emperor.

Augustus ordered this enrollment, or census, of the people that he might get a correct basis for taxation, "looking toward a complete estimate of property and population for the Roman world." It was a dangerous undertaking, however cautiously enforced, and needing time and wisdom for its accomplishment. So the list was made, the emperor did not care how it was made, and instead of forcing any distasteful foreign methods upon his subjects, he respected the peculiarities of every province and allowed each to make the census after its own custom.

Every Roman countryman went into his own city to be registered—that is, the city to which his birthplace was attached; but, by Jewish law, everyone must be enrolled according to tribal or family relations, and so each returned to the "house of his fathers."

Joseph and Mary, belonging to the house of David, were obliged, then, to return for registration to Bethlehem, their common ancestral home. The capitation tax may have been levied on all alike, male and female, and thus made it impossible for Mary to remain behind at Nazareth, but other and deeper

reasons, perhaps, led her to desire a new home, and, of all places, a home in Bethlehem. She could not have been ignorant of the prophecies and rabbinic teachings pointing to Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah.

From Nazareth to Bethlehem was a slow and painful journey of eighty-five miles. Tradition is probably right in picturing Joseph, with leading-string and staff in hand, walking beside an ass on which Mary rides. They would naturally choose the eastern route, both from a desire to avoid Samaria and because this way was the more traveled.

It led from Nazareth over the hills to the ford of the Jordan at Scythopolis, and, then following the eastern bank of the river along through Peræa, recrossed the Jordan at the fords near Jericho. Three days, at least, they must have been on the road, and at this season of the year nothing could have been more cheerless than such slow traveling. The winter rains had set in, the fords were high, the roads were wet, and, though the grass was green and flowers could be seen here and there among the gray limestone rocks, still the whole landscape was as dreary as our own New England in the dark, wet days of November.

The winter sun had already gone down behind the peaks of Hebron as the two travelers wearily climbed the steep, ledgy road to the ancient town of Bethlehem. Here they were in the midst of all that, to them, was most hallowed and dear. In the deepening twilight they could see below them the very fields where Ruth gleaned behind the reapers of Boaz. Here, on the heights around them, David tended his father's sheep. Hither, over the road beneath their feet, came Samuel to anoint the youth king.

Wherever their eyes might fall were shrines of past power and glory that woke mingled feelings of pride and shame, of hope and despair, for here, a thousand years before, David was crowned king of Israel, while now, in dim outline against the dull evening sky, towering from the high head of *Jebel Fureidis* they could see the palace fortress of Herod.

Bethlehem was full of strangers, who, like Joseph and Mary, had come to be enrolled. The inns were crowded, every available place occupied, and no better shelter to be had than a stable. This stable was not a part of the inn, or *khan*, but was one of the numerous limestone caves of Bethlehem attached to a private house.

Over this cave now stands the Church of the Nativity, the oldest Christian church in the world. To this cave, as the birthplace of Jesus, the most ancient and trustworthy traditions point.

Here, that night, the twenty-fifth of December, 749 A. U. C., in the soft gloom, Mary brought forth her first-born Son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.

On the hills, beyond the sleeping village, near *Migdal Eder*, or "Tower of the Flock," priest-shepherds were watching the flocks intended for Temple sacrifices. These sheep were pastured on the hills the year round, as they had to be in the fields thirty days before the Passover, which occurred in February.

It was a clear and beautiful night, under the starlit Syrian sky. The hills lay wrapped in shadows and the ancient pastures slept in silence, broken only by the bleating of the sheep or the far-off cry of a mountain wolf.

Suddenly, unannounced and unexpected, an angel

stands before the shepherds; the glory of the Lord enwraps them, and terror overcomes them. But their fears dissolve in joy when the herald angel says, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you; ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

Then the heavens opened, the starry skies rolled back, and, from beyond the lifted curtains of the night swept down the angel hosts of heaven, singing:

"Glory to God in the highest—
And upon earth, peace—
Among men, good pleasure!"

Clearly, sweetly, the wondrous words fall on their ears; plainly, rapturously, the wondrous vision passes before their eyes; then, faintly fading, the sight and singing vanish, and the stars watch over all.

The shepherds, without waiting for the morning, leave their flocks and make their way rapidly into Bethlehem. The long-delayed, the long-prayed-for announcement has come, and they must see the new King. By the feeble light of a hostelry lantern they find the cave, and here, according to the angel's words, is the Babe wrapped in the swaddling clothes lying in the manger.

It was a night of exultant rejoicing on the hills of Hebron, and the shepherds spread the good news till all that heard it wondered at the "things which were spoken unto them."

CHAPTER II

Infancy

HOW few are the known facts of Christ's early life! Legend has been busy; imagination has filled the gaps; but the authentic Gospels are almost silent. The gospel writers had far different ends in view than a biography of Christ. They wrote that all who read might know of a certainty that Jesus is the Christ, and, knowing, might believe and "have life through his name."

The visit and adoration of the shepherds—the first to bow before Him whom millions worship now—left Mary thinking. She heard their words and pondered them in her heart; she never fully understood them. Mary, like every devout Jew, was awaiting a Messiah, the "Consolation of Israel," and it was impossible for her now to rise any higher than to see in Jesus a king to Israel.

After eight days, according to law, the Holy Child was circumcised and given the name "Jeshua" ("Jesus," the Saviour). Thus he became a true Jew, subject to the law and a partaker of its great privileges.

Thirty-three days later Mary, accompanied by Joseph and Jesus, went up to the Temple for the "purification." By rabbinic law forty-one days must elapse after the birth of a son and eighty-one days after the birth of a daughter before the mother could touch any holy thing or take part in common life. During this period she must keep to the seclusion of

her own home. The purification might take place any time after these days—during any great feast—and if the mother sent her offerings, she need not be present in the Temple herself.

To one so religious and so near Jerusalem as Mary, it was a great privilege to attend the ceremony in person. But there was another reason for her going; Jesus was her first-born Son, free from all bodily blemish that would disqualify him for the priesthood, and the ancient law required that he be presented to the Lord and consecrated to his service. But since the tribe of Levi had been set aside for this work, the child might be “reclaimed” to his parents by the payment of five shekels (about three dollars) as “redemption money.”

The presentation and redemption were quickly made. It was a simple ceremony: the child was given to the priest, with two short benedictions, then, on the payment of the redemption money, was handed back to his parents.

Thus, having fulfilled the law, Mary now ascends the steps in the court of the women for the purification. She has dropped the price of the sacrifices—the price of two turtledoves, the offering of the poor—into one of the contribution chests, and, as the sound of the organ announces the kindling of the incense, she takes her place within one of the wickets at the side of the Nicanor Gate, and, in silent prayer and praise, waits the coming of the priest. He approaches, sprinkles her with the blood of the doves and pronounces her clean.

The ceremony is ended, but, as the parents still linger by the gate, an aged man enters, and, to the amazement of Mary and her husband, stops before

them, takes Jesus in his arms and lifts up his heart in thanksgiving to God.

Simeon was a righteous man and just and of deepest religious spirit. Long had he hoped for Israel's Redeemer. He had watched his people sinking beneath the weight of inward sinfulness and of outward tyranny, and, in his yearning prayers to God for the promised Deliverer, he was told that he should not die before he had "seen the Lord's Christ." This day he sees in the Babe in Mary's arms the fulfillment of the promise, and in his joy exclaims, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Then turning to the marveling parents, he blesses them and with prophetic words points out the mission of their Child and the deep sorrows in store for them.

At this moment an old prophetess, Anna, whose long life had been spent in the Temple, approaching, catches the last words of Simeon, and, looking upon the Holy Child, lifts up her soul in a hymn of thanks, for she also sees in him the Messiah, "the redemption of Jerusalem."

Having performed all things according to the law, Joseph and Mary return to Bethlehem. But they do not return to the cave. How long this dim, rude grotto was their home we do not know. Perhaps it was no longer than the night of the Nativity. At most it could have been but a few days, for, if Joseph had not been able to find a house, Jewish hospitality

—one of the strongest and most beautiful of Jewish national traits—would have provided for them.

Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar may have been the names of the wise men from the East. We do not know. We do not even know that there were three of them. All that we are sure of is the meager story that Saint Matthew tells us. Tradition has named them and given us their history.

It was shortly after the presentation in the Temple that these Wise Men, or Magi, appeared in Jerusalem asking for the Messiah—King of Israel, whose star they had seen at its rising, and to whom they now came to pay homage.

These Magi were not of the evil class so often spoken of as sorcerers and practicers of magic, but were wise men in truth, priest-sages, from the East, who were deeply learned in the sciences, especially astrology.

It is probable that they came from Persia. For two centuries Judæa was a province of the Persian Empire, and many of the Jews never returned to Palestine after the exile, but remained in scattered communities over the lands of the East, where their descendants were still living. Then the Jewish and Persian faiths had much in common, and the interests between the two countries at this time were close and mutual. The East was almost as full of Jews as the West. Judaism went with the Jew; a Jew was nothing if not religious—and Jewish ideas, especially the burning belief that a great prince, the Messiah, was about to be born in Palestine, were diffused through every land.

The Persians were well acquainted with the prophecies concerning him, both those current among the Jews, and that of their own prophet, Balaam, and

they also knew that the expected time was close at hand.

It was this new "star" in the heaven that confirmed their faith. It announced to them his birth and started them on their journey of homage.

The Wise Men came directly to Jerusalem and to Herod, as the one most likely to tell them where the new King might be found.

Their appearance was quickly noised about Jerusalem, and it roused excitement, not only in the palace of Herod, but over all the city.

It was a time of expectation and unrest. The yoke of foreign tyranny galled the people; clouds of the coming storm rolled dark across the horizon; prayers, like the mutterings of distant thunder, rose continually for the Messiah; literature was completely Messianic; messiahs rose everywhere; and Israel only waited the word of the true King. When, therefore, news spread among the rabbis that Magi from Persia, from the land of the prophet Balaam—a prophet of the Messiah, whom the Jews thoroughly honored—had seen the star of the new King, and were now in Jerusalem inquiring where he was born, their excitement led them almost into open rebellion.

But Herod was still the master in Jerusalem. The Wise Men had gone to him with the question, "Where is the King of the Jews born?"

Little did they know Herod. He would have been glad to answer their question! This Idumean usurper, most crafty of tyrants, master-murderer, whose throne was anchored in a sea of blood—he tell of one who had come with claims to his kingdom? The news struck terror to his heart. He immediately called together his high priests and all the rabbis, and with

his usual cunning, asks of them where the King is to be born, having previously found out from the Magi the exact time they first saw the star arise.

With one voice the priests and teachers told Herod that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem. This was all he wanted to know, and now, with pretended interest in his welfare, Herod secretly sends the Wise Men on to Bethlehem with his friendly and imperial wish that when they have found the Child they quickly return, that he also may go and pay homage.

As they leave Jerusalem, to their joy the star arises before them and stands in the heavens over Bethlehem. Passing through the low gate of the town, they find the Holy Family—now living in a “house”—and, spreading their gifts before the Child.

The Wise Men had found the infant Messiah; but as they were about to leave for Jerusalem to deliver to Herod the anxiously awaited news, they were warned in a dream of the real purpose of Herod and they hasten from Bethlehem to “depart into their own country another way.”

In his malignant cunning Herod had graciously inquired of them what time the star first appeared. They told him that it first rose about two years previous to their visit. That was fact number one. He then made the scribes tell him where the child should be born. They had said, Bethlehem was the place. This was fact number two. What more did he want? He knew the time and the place, and now the Wise Men might return to him or they might not. If they came, then only one Child would be murdered; if they did not come, why, he had as many assassins as there were children in Bethlehem, and what were the

lives of twenty or thirty babes, if in any way they threatened him?

The Wise Men told Joseph of their warning dream. Joseph was prepared also by the message that came to him in his sleep. Startled by the dream, he rises, makes ready their few belongings, saddles them upon the ass behind Mary and the Child, and passes through the gates of the silent town, out under the midnight skies, a fugitive, guided only by mysterious Providence.

Egypt was their destination, and passing through Hebron and Beersheba, they were far into the desert when Herod's soldiers enter Bethlehem with orders to slay every male child of two years old or under.

CHAPTER III

The Childhood and Home Life in Nazareth

THE Holy Family was hardly settled in Egypt when they heard of the death of Herod. Jesus was born in December, 5 B. C., and Herod died in the next April.

There may be other lives as tainted as Herod's—there are none more so—but the unspeakable horror of his death is without a parallel in history.

Herod had no right to the Jewish throne. He won his way to power by craft and the sword, and held his place by every means that cunning, cruelty, and determination could devise. He was the son of Antipater, the crafty Idumean who stirred up war between the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the rightful heirs to the throne, and then urged that Pompey be called in as arbiter.

The Roman came with his army in the year 63 B. C., and settled the dispute. He obtained possession of the country on false pretexts; stormed Jerusalem; exiled Aristobulus; robbed the high priest, Hyrcanus, of his crown; and departed, leaving the reins of government practically in the hands of Antipater, as the subject of Rome.

With varying fortunes Hyrcanus and Antipater continued in power, until, in the year 47 B. C., the Idumean became so useful to Rome that Cæsar made him a Roman citizen and procurator of Palestine. This was the beginning of the Idumean dynasty, under

which Christ lived, which culminated in Herod and disappeared with his sons.

At the age of twenty-eight Herod was sent by his father into Galilee to quell the wild hordes of zealots and robbers that infested the mountains and made war on everything Roman. Herod did his work well. He was fearless, strong, energetic, and withal a trained warrior. He subdued Galilee; met all the levies of Rome upon that province; and was soon recognized by Antony as a leader of such power that that rising Roman promised him the crown of all Palestine.

A little after this Antipater was poisoned, and Herod, with his brother Phasælus, by intrigue, murder, and constant fighting, worked their way into an unsteady seat of supreme power. But now, Antigonus, a scion of the Maccabæan house and nephew of Hyrcanus, escaped from exile, raised an army of Parthians, and fell on Jerusalem, capturing Phasælus and driving Herod from the country. Herod fled to Egypt, and building a boat there, by almost superhuman efforts, sailed to Rome. Here he pleaded his cause so well that the Senate made him king of Judæa. From Rome he went directly to Palestine, and, with the help of Cæsar's army, took Jerusalem, June 10, 37 B. C.; murdered Antigonus, and became the master of the country.

Such was Herod's inauguration as king. Such was the character of his long reign. By nature devoid of everything gentle and lovely, this early education in intrigue and war deepened every dark passion, every evil ambition, every brutal instinct within him. But he was a strong man. It was no weak arm that took Palestine against the odds that confronted him; no mere adventurer that organized from chaos his mag-

nificent Palestine; that built up his rich and powerful kingdom from a land devastated by years of war.

Nothing daunted him, and to gain his end he stopped at nothing. He was without scruple. If blasphemy, servility, torture, deceit, divorce, or murder could aid him, he resorted to them as quickly as to fairer means. His policy was one of fair promise and terror at home and a far-sighted servility toward his masters at Rome.

He had a genius for intrigue and a passion for blood. Proscription followed proscription; citizens, soldiers, priests, women, and children were killed. No one was safe that threatened his power or hindered him. The fear of a rival to his throne so haunted him that he went so far as to murder Mariamne, his beautiful wife, and even his own children. As the years of his reign lengthened, his victims numbered thousands, and the slaughter of the Innocents—among whom he hoped to kill Jesus—was only one of countless bloody deeds that marked the last dark days of his life.

Toward the end a loathsome disease fastened upon him; fears tormented him; delirium seized him, and, in his madness, he tried to kill himself. Yet, recovered from these fits, he fought for life again. He knew his time had come, but in his desperate struggle with death he had himself carried to the sulphur-baths of Callirrhoe as a last hope. It was all in vain, and he was taken back to his palace at Jericho to die. Here, only five days before his death, he had his son Antipater murdered, and, as a last act and fitting close to his black and bloody life, he ordered all the chief men and noble families of the land to come to Jericho,

where he imprisoned them in the hippodrome, and commanded his sister Salome—a command she did not obey—to have them slain at the moment of his death, that there might be mourning over all his kingdom.

Thus, in the early part of April, 4 B. C., after a reign of thirty-four years from his taking of Jerusalem, Herod died. His kingdom was divided between his sons: Archelaus was appointed king over Judæa, Samaria and Idumea; Antipas over Galilee and Peræa; and Philip was placed over the lands east of the Jordan.

There were many Jews in Egypt, but Joseph had fled thither only for safety from Herod, and, as soon as he learned of that tyrant's death, he was glad to return to Palestine.

Joseph and Mary had left Nazareth, doubtless with the purpose never to go back, meaning to live henceforth in Bethlehem. They were of David's line, Jesus was to sit on David's throne, and where should the young Prince live but at Bethlehem, the ancestral home? It was toward Bethlehem, then, that the Holy Family again directed their steps as they departed from Egypt. Joseph knew of Herod's death, but until he entered the country he did not hear of the accession of his son Archelaus as ruler over Judæa.

Archelaus already gave evidence that he was the son of Herod, having all his father's viciousness, but little of his father's strength. Fearing him, Joseph changed his plans, and, instead of stopping at Bethlehem, kept on into Galilee and once more took up his abode in Nazareth.

Nazareth, at this time, was a small and busy town of perhaps four thousand inhabitants. It lies, nest-

ling at the upper end of a little valley, in Lower Galilee, just north of the great plain of Esdraelon, from which it is separated by a long wall of mountain.

The crowded, narrow streets climb almost out of the valley on the western side. Mounting through these, beyond the uppermost houses, to the highest plateau of the hills, a scene of grandeur stretches away on every side. This height is the vantage ground of all Palestine. From no other point, not even from the summit of Tabor, can so rich and extensive a view of the country be obtained. You stand seventeen hundred eighty-eight feet above the Mediterranean, whose blue waters you can see spreading away at the north and west till they melt into the blue of the upper sea.

Still to the northwest, between you and the sea, lies the Bay of Acre, from whose sandy shores hill rises on hill, as they run landward, culminating, beyond the fertile plain of El Buttauf, in the heights of Safed.

But far over Safed, and far over the mountains beyond, snowcapped and eternal, towers the head of lofty Hermon. Here, where we stand, Jesus often stood, and, looking across the wilderness of smaller mountaintops sixty miles to the north, gazed, with swelling heart, upon Hermon's colossal peak, rising against the horizon at the very gates of the land.

How Hermon must have stirred the soul of the young Galilean! Yonder, on the very frontiers of the country, it stands, the fortress of ancient Israel. On its side was built the old border citadel of Dan, and, as Jesus looked, he might almost have seen on the green slopes the town of Cesarea Philippi, the northernmost point of his earthly journeyings.

Turning to the east, beyond Tabor and the Sea of Galilee, the dim outlines of the ranges of Bashan are seen, and far in the southeast, over the mountains of Gilboa and the hidden valley of the Jordan, rise the mountains of Gilead. Just below, to the south, extends the wide plain of Esdraelon, walled beyond by the woody slopes of Carmel, which, shouldering their way westward, suddenly leap from their highest headlands sheer into the sea. Behind the long line of Carmel are the mountains of Samaria, and over these, to the south, the gray and stony hills of Judæa, just as they are today.

Such was the horizon of Jesus. Here, in the valley town, at the home of his parents, he spent all but three years of his life. And no spot in all Palestine could have so harmonized with his spiritual nature. The scene that spread below him from the ridge above the town might well stimulate the aspirations of his soul, and the environment of valley and hill that cradled Nazareth might soothe him to peace. The valley was fertile and cultivated, and after the spring rains Nazareth lay in the lap of green fields, with peopled pastures all around, in an air perfumed with flowers and flooded with bird-song.

Surrounded, as it is, by mountains, and huddled away here in a little valley, we have usually thought of Nazareth as a lonely, stagnant, out-of-the-way place, quite cut off from the outer world. But it was not so. Through Nazareth ran one of the great caravan routes to Damascus, and travelers from every nation of the earth were continually in the village streets. They added largely to the business of the town, they acquainted the Nazarenes with the manners and customs of foreign lands, and kept them in touch with the

thought and progress of the great world outside their valley.

But, beside this, Nazareth was the rallying point of the priests of this section. Thither they came before going up to Jerusalem to take their turn in the Temple. Consequently it was not only a place of some commercial life but a religious center as well.

Of Christ's early childhood in Nazareth we have but the merest word. If left entirely to our imagination, we should have known that he "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." But with this brief notice in the evangelic narrative—the Apocryphal Gospels tell some preposterous stories of these years—we are obliged to fill up the gap as we like, till Luke, for one moment, lifts the veil from the Temple scene, and we see the boy Christ at the age of twelve questioning the doctors at Jerusalem.

As the geologist, by fossil fragments and, here and there, a stone-frozen footprint, re-peoples the primal world, or, by a broken blade of horn from the debris of their shell-heaps, writes a life-history of the earliest of our race, so, from this brief moment of revelation in the boyhood of Christ, we may, in part, interpret the silence that enwraps the years in which he grew to manhood.

The feast of Passover began this year—the year 8 A. D.—on the 8th of April. Jesus had passed his twelfth birthday in December, and now, in accordance with Jewish custom, he was allowed to go up with his parents to Jerusalem to attend the great festival.

When twelve years old the Jewish boy became of

age, and was subject to all the requirements of the law. He then began to receive instruction in the law, and was called "a son of the Torah." At this age he must observe the religious ordinances and he must learn a trade, for he was no longer a child under parental authority, but was *gadol*, or "grown up," and could then marry.

We can imagine Christ's eagerness and wonder on this first caravan journey to the Holy City, how deep the impressions must have been and how powerful their influence at this formative period of his life. From the small circle of home friends into the motley crowd of a great band of pilgrims! From the seclusion of the little mountain town into wide, strange lands, holy with history! From Nazareth to Jerusalem!

No greater event ever came to a Jewish boy than his first pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and what must it have meant to the boy Jesus! He had looked forward to his visit with deep, half-fathomed feelings of reverence and expectation. Often, from the heights above the town, he had turned his face toward Jerusalem, and in the gray, uncertain light of his mission's dawn, had longed to see his Father's house, had longed to know what the full daybreak of this whitening dawn would be.

From every quarter of the world and by every means, came vast multitudes to Jerusalem to attend the Passover. At these times, Josephus tells us, the city was packed to its limit with nearly three millions of pilgrims. The number may have been especially large at this feast, for it was a time of comparative peace to the borders of the Roman world, and particularly in Palestine. Archelaus had been banished

by the emperor, and Judæa was now under the governor of Syria, Quirinius. The bands of zealots were quiet and the pilgrims moved along the highways undisturbed and with little fear.

It was the gala season in Jerusalem. The city was decked for the occasion and every stranger was made welcome. Hospitality was not limited by the city walls. Houses were overflowing and every available spot within and without the walls—courts, housetops, streets and gardens—were covered with tents for the pilgrims who could not be better accommodated.

But it was not this bewildering throng of people; not the babble of myriad tongues in strange languages; not the festive decorations of the city; not the great walls, the high towers, nor the busy streets that held the attention of Jesus; at all these he wondered, but tarried not until the Temple rose before him.

To every common pilgrim hither the Temple was the greatness of Jerusalem, but as Jesus stood at the foot of the mount upon which the Temple rested, a crown of gold and marble, and gazed upon its splendor, he saw his Father's house and yielded to the irresistible impulse to enter and be about his Father's business.

Here he spent every moment of the feast days, so absorbed with the ceremonies and teachings that he even forgot the time appointed by his parents for the return home. As they were not required to remain longer than noon of the third day, Jesus may have been told that they would begin their journey homeward toward evening of this day. By this time the Passover had been eaten and the sacrifices offered, and only those who wished to enjoy the festive holiday season remained the rest of the week. Now it was on

these last five days of the week that the doctors of the Sanhedrin came out on the terrace of the Temple and taught the people who gathered round them, and it was here Jesus found them, and tarried, while his parents, supposing him somewhere in the caravan, started out of the city for Nazareth.

In the jam and excitement of the multitudes crowding through the city's narrow gates, it is little wonder that Jesus was not missed. But when the band lengthened out along the wide road, they found that he was not with them and thought he must be among their friends. Then when they pitched their tents for the night and Jesus did not appear, the parents became anxious and went out among their acquaintances and friends searching for him. He was not in the caravan. He had been left in Jerusalem. Lost! It was a sleepless night of fear. The caravan had camped still within sight of Jerusalem, but Jesus, lost in that thronged city, would as well be lost among the wild hills of Judæa.

At dawn Joseph and Mary hurry back to Jerusalem and continue their search. The night comes, and darkness, and grief and despair. The next day, after looking everywhere that an ordinary boy would likely have strayed, they finally go up to the Temple, and, there, within the circle that surrounded the doctors, they find Jesus sitting close at the teachers' feet, the center of the wondering and fascinated group.

Of the great priests of that time who were perhaps among these doctors were Hillel, and his son, Rabbau; Simeon, and his grandson, Gamaliel, a youth at this time about the age of Christ. Then, too, perhaps in the little company were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa.

When the troubled parents found their quiet Son in the midst of these great men—eagerly asking them the meaning of these Passover solemnities, and questioning them about the coming Messiah, and listening in rapt attention to their teachings, delighting them with his beautiful, boyish face, his frank earnestness, and amazing them by his questions and insight—they were as astonished as the rabbis.

Mary must have ceased “pondering” over those things that occurred at his birth and at his presentation here in the Temple years ago; she must have ceased to wonder at the mystery of his birth, even, else she would not have felt and spoken as she did.

“How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” The first recorded words of Jesus! We can never know just their depth of consciousness. Nor did his parents! Like a soft and strange rebuke fell these simple and lofty words. Mary felt them, but she did not understand. And Jesus went down with them to Nazareth.

And now for eighteen years the veil again falls over the life of Christ. The evangelic writers leave this long period of development in silence. And again we realize that the Gospels were not intended to furnish a life of Christ but to confirm belief in his Messiahship. In his village home, with environments common to every other Nazarene, but with qualities of mind and heart no other being ever possessed, Jesus grew to manhood.

The current of his life was not determined by outward conditions and events. It was channeled from within. But it was in this simple, quiet mountain home, and among these grand and happy hills, that

the deep springs of his life rose, and from their pure, sweet waters carry the eternal flavor and fragrance of these untainted sources.

It was not in the synagogue school, nor by the instruction of the rabbis, that Jesus was educated. He probably learned to read and write Hebrew in the synagogue, but little more than this. Certainly he never attended the schools of the rabbis at Jerusalem—there were none at Nazareth—for he had none of their titles to learning. On hearing him in the Temple, the people asked in contempt, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

But he did know, and that he owed but little for his knowledge to the hidebound ecclesiasticism, the arbitrary casuistry, the punctilious hypocrisy of the Pharisees, or to the shallow scholasticism of the Sadducees, or to the exclusive, unnatural asceticism of the Essenes, we are glad. His teachers—"if we may say teachers in speaking of so lofty an originality"—were not the scribes. Their dead ritualism had its effect upon him, but it was a negative effect, and forced him only the more within himself. Nor were his teachers the Greek philosophers. There were towns near Nazareth that were almost wholly Greek. The Greek language too was a common medium of intercourse in Palestine, and though Jesus usually spoke in Aramaic, we judge from his having talked with Pilate that he also knew the Greek tongue, but we see no trace of Hellenic culture in his life.

The parents of Jesus were his first teachers. In his home, with a mother so high-souled, so religious, and so deeply versed in the Scriptures, Jesus heard the Bible read every day, and listened while Mary interpreted it with feeling and insight that would have

been beyond a scribe. Whatever the number and relation of his "brothers and sisters"—we believe them brothers and sisters born to Joseph and Mary after Jesus was born—they were certainly a large and strongly individualistic family. There were marked Essenic tendencies, open nationalism, deep and zealous Pharisaism, and burning Messianic hopes within the circle of his home. In the midst of these hopeful influences Jesus lived; and, while there may have been little sympathy between him and the others during his home-life, this was, none the less, an atmosphere congenial to his deep, inward development. But that he loved them, and loved his home, and remembered his childhood there with tenderest emotions, we know from his frequent allusions later to children, and their happy ways, and to his own pathetic homelessness.

But the valley and the hills were about him, and his sensitive nature, like the lilies that he watched and loved, grew into flower in this world of sunshine and of wild grandeur. More than that of his home do we find the influence of this nature revealed in him later.

It was not alone as poet and philosopher, but as a careful and sympathetic observer, that Jesus knew these valleys and hills. He loved the wild things of the wood and field; he knew the secrets of their lives, and he felt his kinship with every one, as all of one Father. He knew there was One who was caring for the lilies, the sparrows, the foxes and himself; and in the bending heavens, across the wondrous landscapes, amid the changing seasons, in all nature everywhere he saw God's first revelation of himself as Father.

There was nothing strained or unbalanced in Jesus' development; nothing unnatural in his growth during these years. His intimacy with nature, and their near and sacred fellowship, were real and spontaneous. So, too, were his contact with men and his knowledge of them. He knew men, not from some "high solitude above the storm's career," where they moved like pigmies across the "plains extending wide," but as a man among men. He was brother, friend, neighbor, and laborer, in common with all men of the village. With them he felt the oppressors' power. Their growing poverty, their deepening misery, their wants, their woes, their hopes, even their threatening unrest, were his. But the conception of a kingdom greater than David's, a kingdom without sword and blood, was shaping itself in his soul. Here in Nazareth Jesus learned the joys and sorrows, the strength and weakness of human hearts; learned to sympathize with man's suffering; learned to believe in man's salvation.

Outwardly he differed little from his townspeople, and when he returned to them as their Messiah, they scouted his claims, for he had left Nazareth a simple village carpenter. They did not see that a great and noble life could be lived among them in obscurity, poverty, and in humble and constant toil. Idleness, luxury, and notoriety stood to them for largeness of life, little realizing that greatness of soul is a growth from within, and is not wrapped about with our cloaks.

These years of retirement and of cheerful toil were also years of study and thought. Jesus was not born mentally and spiritually mature any more than he was born physically mature. His mental and spiritual

development was not complete in the cave of the Nativity. His grasp of Jewish history; his acquaintance with man and nature; his profound knowledge of the Scriptures; his conception of God; and the consciousness of his power and mission, came to him as they come to us—through study and thought, through sacrifice, suffering, and prayer.

Especially did he study the Scriptures. The Bible was his textbook, his library, his "meat and drink." The Scriptures were the Father's direct revelation of himself. Jesus knew them profoundly, all of them, even the uncanonical books, and some of them he knew by heart. How well he used them to the silence and shame of his enemies, we know from the gospel narratives. It was the spirit of the book of Daniel, the glorious dreams of Isaiah, the deep fervor of the Psalms, especially, that exalted and sustained him.

Thus the years of his simple, sinless home life passed away, till the time of his great preparation ceased. Submissive and content, he toiled in the school of common life, that he might become Life's teacher. Inwardly and outwardly, in favor with God and man, and in sympathy with the aspirations and needs of his people and his time, he grew until his development was complete.

But these happy and healthful influences of his surroundings were external and secondary. They were the atmosphere into which his life expanded, while the sources of that life itself and its constant sustenance lie far back beyond our ken, in the deep and sacred silences of his soul's inner self—the Holy of holies, where he and his Father met.

CHAPTER IV

The World Awaiting Jesus

THE thirty years of obscurity and humble home life are done. The fullness of time is come, and God sends forth his Son. Jesus is prepared to go forth from Nazareth into the world, not a village carpenter, but the world's Messiah. And the world is prepared to receive him. The hour has struck for both Jew and Gentile; Israel's needs have reached their greatest depth, her hopes are at their height; Greece has given the world a common tongue, a common civilization, and in her philosophy a common preparation for the higher truths of Christianity; Rome has welded the nations into a single world-realm and given law and order to the whole; and Jesus comes into the world with his everlasting kingdom as the world under Rome comes out of narrow nationalism into universal empire.

This period of transition marked the crisis and the climax of Roman and of ancient history. Rome was the center and capital of the nations. She had pushed her empire to the boundaries of the world. There was nothing beyond these borders worthy of conquest and possession. From the mountains of Scotland to the jungles of Africa, from the Atlantic to the lands beyond the Euphrates she held sway, unifying the most dissevered lands and peoples, and incorporating their heterogeneous civilizations into a Hellenized-

Romanism, with factors Judaistic, Oriental, and even Germanic.

Rome the city has become Rome the empire; but the stupendous transition had not come about without revolutions in every phase of life and thought. Christianity was born while the world was in the throes of these changes, and it was this universal upheaval, shaking the foundations of society, that broke up the heathen soil of the world-field and made it ready for the seed of the gospel.

This preparation of Rome was threefold: material, intellectual, and religious. Life and property of Roman citizens everywhere were safe. The din of great battles was over, for there were no more lands to subdue; and Augustus ruled over a world of peace and security. "Safe are now land and sea; the cities flourish in unity and peace," says an inscription commemorating one of the celebrations to Augustus. This could never have been said of the world before, and it was a condition very necessary to the missionaries of Christianity.

Not only had she brought peace, but in building up her empire, Rome broke down the barriers of national hostility and distrust and threw all the world open to travel and commerce. From the golden milestone in the Forum, roads, superior and thoroughly guarded, radiated to the limits of Roman territory. They ran like a network over every province. They were the warp in the weaving of the vast and many-patterned fabric of the empire.

Travel and trade increased to enormous proportions; students went to and fro among the famous schools; new lands were opened; new cities built; new schools founded, and the interchange of thought and

customs in this transportation of soldiers, officials, scholars, tradesmen, and tourists brought society to the standstill of perfect ripeness.

Greek culture had already spread itself largely, but Rome took it up and completed the scattering. The rich and flexible Greek tongue Rome made the common medium of intercourse. Saint Paul, speaking the Greek current in Jerusalem, could go into any city of the world and be understood.

Greek philosophy, subtle, beautiful and lofty, had leavened all thought. Western Judaism, even, had become Hellenized, and through Herod Greek culture had modified the very life of Palestine itself. But Hellenism, while it marks the highest level to which the human mind, unaided by revelation, ever attained, and embodies many pure and sublime ideals of God and man, still failed to satisfy the human soul in its solution of the problems of life and destiny, and in this failure awoke the needs for something higher, and thus opened a door for Christianity. There was no conflict between "the good, the beautiful, and the true" in Hellenism and Christianity. In point of time, then, Greek philosophy was a forerunner of Christianity, and in modes of thought it was an easy stepping-stone to many into the higher truths revealed by Christ.

With this material and intellectual high-tide, the religiousness of the age also reached its flood, while at the same time morality, completely divorced from worship, ebbed into stagnation, and its pestilential waters dripped poison into every spring of national life. There was much good moralizing, however. Stoicism uttered many sentiments that were worthy of Christianity, but it numbered only a few characters

among its representatives who could have borne the name "Christian." It lacked all power to regenerate and quicken moral life, and like epicureanism, its base and sensual rival, led finally to despair.

Despair was written over the door of every Roman institution. The good and evil alike had reached their limits. The good was ripe, and decay had already set in, and the evil had run beyond all hope of mastery. It is impossible for us to understand the viciousness, the immorality, the absolute corruption of the time. Caligula wishes all Rome had but one neck for him to wring; he spends five hundred thousand dollars on a single banquet; Nero drives a herd of five hundred she-asses in his train, that his wife may bathe in their milk; he murdered his mother, and is readily acquitted by his fawning Senate; and Hadrian, miring to the bottom of the slough of nameless and unnatural vice, deifies a youth with whom he had lived in the vilest relations, and erects temples of worship to him.

The emperors were closely copied by the nobles, and these in their way were no more corrupt than the lower strata of freemen and freedmen. Labor was stamped with disgrace, and the freemen, left idle after the wars or driven from their farms by grasping landholders, flocked into Rome, where they were fed by thousands from the public crib and amused at the arena with free sports, whose bloody cruelty was a chief influence in the general demoralization to be later directed against the early Christians.

Another evil influence was that of the freedmen. These one-time slaves had in most cases won their freedom by the basest means, and stained with their former servitude, schooled in every evil practice, and

lacking all sense of honor, they were a subtle and potent poison in public life. But the slave system worked greater moral death than this. It was chiefest among those factors making for social ruin. Over half of the empire's population of one hundred and twenty million were slaves. Some single masters owned as many as twenty thousand, and this incredible number of human beings was absolutely at the master's will for any purpose or wish; to maim, torture, or murder, as lust, caprice, or anger might move him. The slaves were beyond the pale of humanity, and their treatment worked corruption, depravity, and dissolution in every department of life. It wrecked the home. License and female dissipation grew in consequence of slavery to such an extent that marriage almost ceased. Chastity became the rare exception, and the sanctity and obligations of the home and marriage vows so little respected that a Roman moralist of the time exclaims, "Innocence is not merely rare; it has no existence."

Yet never was the world more religious—if we dare call these base superstitions, these horrible and repulsive rites, religion—than now. Religion stood for the essence of all that was vile. The temples of Rome were the fountains of her festering impurity, disease, and death. Meanwhile one feature of even this polluted religion helped to prepare the way for Christianity. With every national cult tolerated in Rome, the great political revolutions, the clash and intermingling of peoples had disintegrated all local beliefs, and had given rise to the widespread idea of a single religion for all men, which now took form in the deification of the Roman emperors. Thus, this widening and unifying of religious worship made ready many

minds for the reception of that sublime conception of Christ—the Universal Fatherhood of God.

Such was the Roman world. "Help!" it cried; but whence was help to come? In vain did it turn to philosophy, morality, and religion. Despair was the lost word of these. Blight and death had touched everything heathen, and the black vulture Ruin hovered low for his spoil. The soul was lost to hope, and, turned in upon itself, sought self-destruction as a last refuge. The world had reached the goal of its suffering and need; it was weary with laboring for truth; it was heavily laden with disappointments of the search for life, and, all unconsciously, it stood waiting the salvation of perfect virtue in Jesus; it stood longing to hear: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The world was athirst for the "water of life," but the river must have channels through which to flow to these barren and sin-burned wastes. These channels were at hand, for while the Jews as a nation rejected Jesus, their monotheistic faith had provided a birthplace for Christianity, which, in their dispersion, they were the means of scattering to the earth's far ends.

In everything the Jew was religious: the social, intellectual, and political phases of his life were but as many phases of his religious life. His history was the history of his religion, and apart from his religion he had no history. In the repeated shipwrecks of Israel it was her religion that saved the nation, and since the disintegration of the nation it is his religion that has preserved the individual Jew. As he had no life apart from his religion, and as that

religion had little in common with any other faith, the Israelite differed in every essential respect from every other people. Wherever he went he was always a Jew.

The Greek or the Roman could carry his religion with him as he traveled, or he could readily find a faith kindred, in part at least, to his own in any foreign land. The Jew could not. He had but one God—the God of his fathers; he had but one temple—the Temple at Jerusalem; and though the vast majority of the Jews were scattered over the Roman world, in every land and city, still, as they had but one God and Temple, so they had but one political center—Jerusalem. Over a million Jews were settled along the valley of the Nile; sixty thousands were in Rome alone; but toward Jerusalem they all prayed; to Jerusalem they all sent tithes, and in Jerusalem they all hoped. They were no longer the people of Israel; they had become a world-nation.

The Jew was thus by very nature a stranger and a wanderer. He was prohibited by everything Jewish from making any country his own save the lands given to his fathers; from paying allegiance to any king save the God of Israel; from making connections with any people other than his own countrymen. As he was kept from becoming one with the people among whom his wanderings brought him, so he was also kept from the enervating and debasing temptations of idleness and luxury that were the atmosphere of many of these foreign lands—as in Alexandria, Rome, and in Greece—and thus he was preserved in his individuality, industry, and integrity. Hedged in by his uncompromising religion as by a great wall, the Jew had no interest in the social and political changes

about him, so long as they did not touch Jewish interests, and asked only peace and protection in these strange lands and the liberty to worship God as he wished.

This separation of the Jews from everything un-Jewish about them naturally bound them the more closely to one another, and strengthened their love of Israel and her religion. Wherever a number of Jews settled, if there were enough of them, they built a synagogue and there worshiped Jehovah with the same songs and prayers and the same Scripture readings as were used that day in the synagogues of Palestine.

Here, in the midst of the splendid temples of heathen darkness, the Jew preserved all the lofty and hallowed forms of his worship. In the drunken gayety of Alexandria, and amid the mad rush of life at Rome, the Jews observed their Sabbaths and feast days in the face of opposition, and oftentimes of bitter persecution. On these days their shops were closed, and the deriding populace could hear in the synagogue the chanting of the solemn hymns, the reading of the Scriptures, and might even pause to listen to a sermon by the rabbi or by some passing priest, who had been invited in to speak to them, as Saint Paul often was.

These synagogues were scattered as far and wide as the Jews themselves, and they served as so many mission stations, already built and preparing in a hundred ways for the introduction of the gospel, soon to be brought to them by the missionary disciples of Christ.

It was to these synagogues that Saint Paul and his coworkers went directly on reaching a new city, and

though they were often rejected, and their teaching scorned, they were always given at least one hearing, and were frequently received and believed. Without these synagogues up and down the wide Roman world we cannot see how Christianity could have been given to the Gentiles without an immeasurably greater struggle and delay. This was a decided factor in the fullness of time.

The Jews of the Western dispersion were much more ready for Christianity than those of Palestine or of the Eastern dispersion. In the West, however persistently they had resisted Hellenic culture, they had unconsciously yielded to its broadening influence, and instead of looking backward into Jewish history for their hope, as the home Jews did, they were looking forward toward a new day for Israel.

But they were looking. They were Hellenic in language and manners, but they were one withal in their hope of a coming Messiah. Like a guiding star, this hope rose above them, lighting them on, until the time should come when it should rise and stand over Jerusalem and guide them all from the islands of the sea and from the distant edges of the earth back to Palestine, a conquering and victorious nation. They carried this hope wherever they went, making many converts to their religion, and waking an almost universal longing in the hearts of men, to whom the gospel of Christ came as a complete fulfillment.

A voice is filling all Palestine with prophetic echoes. It is John, the son of the priest Zacharias, breaking his life's silence and piercing the dark clouds that envelop his country with prophetic lightnings, whose thunders shake the land.

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand," he proclaims; "prepare ye the way." The kingdom of heaven is at hand! The cry sweeps like a tidal wave over Palestine. Off in Nazareth of Galilee Jesus hears the call, and leaves home and his carpenter bench and goes forth to meet John—the fulfillment of John's prophecy.

Long had Israel been waiting this call. She is now ready for the Messiah. Never, since the earliest promise of a Saviour, had her needs so pressed her to pray for his speedy coming. Since the scepter passed from the hands of the brave Maccabees into the family of Esau—the hated Herodians—her fortunes had grown steadily worse. Now, for the first time since the Babylonish Captivity, a foreigner and a Gentile held absolute sway over Judæa. Tiberius, the Roman, was master of Israel.

There had been little change—none for the better—in the political situation of the country since Herod's death. The disposition of lands among his sons remained after these thirty years as he had made them, except in the case of Judæa. Here Archelaus, whom Herod made king, was banished by Rome for his outrages, and Judæa was now ruled directly by Rome through the governor of Syria.

Herod Antipas was still ruler over Galilee and Peræa, the territories in which fell the greater part of Christ's ministry. Antipas, like Archelaus, kept pace with his father in all but his father's virtues. He was weak, luxurious, and dissipated, with not a redeeming quality. Even his passion for architecture and building—he built the city of Tiberius at the upper end of the Sea of Galilee—was but a slavish pandering to Rome for favor. He had nothing in

common with the people he governed, and added sorely to their grievous burdens.

Philip, too, crawled at the feet of Rome; but he was the best of the sons of Herod, and in his long reign of thirty-seven years the people of Batanaca and his other provinces east of the Sea of Galilee enjoyed comparative peace.

But the yoke of Roman tyranny on the nation as a whole was never so heavy and so galling. Of all the Roman emperors, Tiberius was most bitter against the Jews, and under his violent hand Palestine suffered to the limit of endurance. With willing tools in his creatures, Pontius Pilate, the procurator, and Caiaphas, the base high priest, Tiberius instituted a reign of insult, robbery, persecution, and murder such as was unknown even under the first Herod.

The Holy of holies and the sanctity of the home were wantonly profaned, and the honor of women was nowhere safe. From the frequent insurrections of the Nationalists and from the extortionate taxings, the industries of Galilee were becoming paralyzed. The poor widow, the idler in the market place, the debtor going to prison, were sights growing more and more common. The most grinding poverty, misery, and even starvation, prevailed in many parts of the once prosperous country.

Is it a cause of wonder that the voice in the wilderness, declaring Him, the promised Saviour of Israel, at hand, should set every loyal heart in Palestine ablaze with hope?

Such was the political condition of Palestine, and such—even worse—the state of her religious life. Tiberius, in his way, made a better emperor and a better god than Annas and Caiaphas made high

priests. The priesthood was robbed of all but the shadow of its ancient power, and was now sought as a favor of Rome because of the opportunity it offered for violence, luxury, and self-indulgence. It had become the high seat of corruption, and it shows more surely than any other feature how low the tide of religious life had fallen.

But, outwardly, ceremonially, Israel's religion had reached almost perfection. The Jews washed and dressed and read and prayed and fasted and sacrificed more now than ever before. Their substitutes for love to God and man were as numerous and complete as thousands of scribes through hundreds of years could make them. Schools of theology were as numerous as our public schools to-day, and Josephus tells us there was the enormous number of twenty thousand priests in the country at this time. Commentaries on the Scriptures grew, and grew so endlessly, and were so bulky, that they smothered the inspired books and had now taken their place as the guide in things religious.

Thus the dead letter of the law remained, a monumental ceremonialism over the grave of the Spirit of worship, the life of true religion.

Politically and religiously, the time of the fullness of Israel's needs had come. How anxiously she awaited the Messiah, and how readily she would receive him, is shown by her reception of John.

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," was the spark struck out from the desert flint by the steel of John that set the tinder of Messianic hope in Palestine ablaze.

Well might words from the lips of such a man fall

burning hot. None other like him had these corrupt times beheld. Here at last was a prophet of the type in Israel these four hundred years extinct. This is no oily-tongued teacher of the synagogue; no sleek and well-fed dealer in smooth rhetoric and hair-splitting discussions on the length of Sabbath-day journeys; no scribe or Pharisee, in flowing robes and broad phylacteries, with pompous semblance of piety; no "reed to be shaken by the wind." Here is a prophet of the line of Moses, of Elijah, and of Isaiah—honest, stern, mighty, and fearless. Look at that bronzed face, that long hair, those firm-pressed lips, those piercing eyes. Look at that simple garb of camel's hair girt with leathern belt! The very spirit of the desert! The stern and rugged lineaments of the wilderness are marked in every feature of this great and austere personality, as grand as the solitudes, powerful and gaunt as the ragged, barren hills. His eye flashes like the flame of the desert sun; his voice rolls through the heart like thunder, and his mighty soul, like some wild cataract, bears all before it.

He is well-fitted to be the teacher of such a time. He is its extreme opposite. His food is the locust and wild honey; his drink is the river; his roof the open skies; his home the desolate wilderness; his companions the rivers, rocks, the mountains and sea, the wild beasts and the storms, his own large soul and God. He is the perfect master of self; the servant only of duty; the leader of his time.

That the words of such a man should make their way from the solitudes of the desert into the cities and to the distant borders of Palestine we are not surprised. But it was not alone the personality behind the words that gave them life; it was the message of

the words themselves. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," was the cry; "prepare yourselves for it." By admonition and warning John exhorts them to get ready for the Coming One, who was even now among them—in whom the Kingdom would be realized.

"The good news of the kingdom of heaven" was with John, as with Christ, the burden of his preaching, in which was the essence of Old Testament prophecy and the whole of the New Testament fulfilled. The coming of the kingdom of heaven, the rule of God upon earth, was the substance of the Old Testament. It explains the very existence of the Old Testament, the existence of Israel and all of God's dealings with his chosen people. The whole history of Israel was but one long preparation for a time when God should be enthroned in peace and love and righteousness as the Ruler of the world, a kingdom universal, heavenly and eternal.

This was the King and kingdom understood and preached by John. But this was far from the ideas and the hopes of the Jews that flocked from every quarter of the land to the mouth of the Jordan to hear of the coming Messiah. On every page of the sacred Scriptures glowed the promise of his coming; the last word of the Old Testament burned of hope; and in the interim since that last prophetic voice every wave of disaster in church and state had carried them but the higher upon this rock. Now a Tiberius, a Pontius Pilate, a Herod and a Caiaphas held the high seats of the nation, and were grinding God's chosen in the dust beneath their heels. Could they suffer more? Had not the time come? Would not the Promised One now appear with the sword, and once more establish David's throne?

This was the Jewish idea of the Kingdom; this, their hope in a Messiah. It was with this hope that they hurried from city, from village, from hamlet and wild hill—Pharisee, Sadducee, the high and low, minus creed and cast—all ready to take up arms to follow the leader, to die for Israel.

CHAPTER V

End of Private and Beginning of Public Life

BUT John's was not a call to arms, not a call for national uprising. With all the intensity of his single-purposed soul, he believed the Messiah to be at hand; but he had not only grasped the fact of this near advent; he had seen, with a vision piercing far deeper into prophecy than was possible to Sadducee or Pharisee, the Isaiah-picture of the "King in his beauty" and understood better than any other of his time the nature of Christ's coming. With Elijah's searching fearlessness and with something of that prophet's bitter gloom, he lays bare the sins of Israel, and with the deep fervor, the rich imagery of Isaiah, he colors the new dawning and urges the people to prepare for it with that personal repentance and purity which all knew must usher in the Kingdom. This was to be a kingdom of righteousness and prosperity for the righteous only; for the King would come with the ax and winnowing-fan, and the worthless tree and the chaff would be destroyed by fire.

John was a Jew, and his conception—grand beyond all who had been before him—was still Jewish. His kingdom was a Jewish kingdom, and its righteousness and prosperity strictly national. So widely did it differ from the universal kingdom, as it appeared in Jesus, that John doubted at one time whether Jesus

was the One who should come or whether he should look for another.

Many who came to John's preaching were doubtless disappointed; many were angered; but many believed. He snatched the cloak of hypocrisy from the religious leaders and uncovered the violence, the corruption, the pride of high and low. He leveled the distinctions of race and blood and position; he accused, rebuked, warned, and pleaded with that courage, truth, and force that silenced and convicted. He called them to repent and to bring forth the fruits of repentance in lives of righteousness and purity; and then, as Moses had been commanded to prepare Israel for the first Covenant by a symbolic baptism of the people, so John would prepare them for the new Covenant of the Kingdom by the initiatory rite of a new baptism.

From the untenanted wilderness lying about the Dead Sea and the mouth of the Jordan, John had come up along the river as far as Bethabara, a place—as near as we can locate it, at one of the fords opposite Jericho—at the ford where the Israelites in the olden time first crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. Here he was baptizing, and here the eager crowds gathered to listen to his preaching.

It was the Sabbatic year 779-780, and the people, free from agriculture and business, were at liberty to attend him. Driven by stress of circumstances, more hopeless than they had ever been before, and drawn by this prophet with the message, the appearance and the power of the prophets of old, the multitudes find in John a leader from their darkness, confusion, and despair, and follow him. Some even believe him the Messiah, though every burning ray of his preaching

is focused on a Coming One, whose shoe latchet he is not worthy to loose.

He leaped into national religious leadership. His fame spread; his following continually grew. The autumn and early winter wore away, and still the prophet, with increasing faith and zeal unabated, continued to expect and to preach the approach of the Messiah. Jesus had heard of his cousin's work long ere this. He knew the One whom John was awaiting was none other than himself. The strong desire to be about his Father's business that woke within him on his first sight of the Temple at the age of twelve and caused him to forget all else that day, had been since that time the ruling passion of his life; but during these eighteen years of humble toil and earnest thought in Nazareth, the character of that business had been growing clearer to him, until now he fully realized that it meant the "kingdom of heaven" proclaimed by John. Still he lingered at Nazareth.

Thus the winter passed. The people were all baptized, but John still preached along the Jordan. January, 780 (27 A. D.), came, and now, at last convinced that John's preaching is of God, leaving Nazareth, Jesus comes to the Jordan to be baptized of John, that he may "fulfill all righteousness," and, in this last act of his private life, close the door on that life and open the way into his public life, the life of the Kingdom.

John and Jesus probably met alone, for Luke tells us "the people were all baptized," and it was the first meeting between them. They had heard of each other. They knew the circumstances attending each other's birth, but their lives, like their missions and their characters, had fallen far apart. Both devoted

their lives to the Kingdom, but while one was the pioneer of the Kingdom, the other was in himself that Kingdom; each spent thirty years in preparation for his great mission, during which John must draw away from men, and, in the unbroken solitudes of the desert, learn of God, while Jesus, knowing the Father, must mingle with men as man. John came to his labor from the wilderness; Jesus came from the workshops of human Nazareth. Of what passed between the two men we know but little. It is another of those silences sealing so much of their lives. At first John did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Daily did he look and pray for him, but little did he expect the Prince of Israel to come to him.

It may have been morning on that January day. The winter sun was pouring its flood of light into the dark defiles of the Jordan and gilding the ripples that murmured over the pebbles of the ford at Bethabara. The place was deserted save by those vocal silences, those unheard voices that dwell in deserts and speak in the wide chambers of prophetic souls. John mused alone by the river's edge. It was upon the sin of Israel he was brooding, and his prayers were ascending with the incense-clouds of the river's mists that the Promised One might this day appear. Jesus stands on the bank above and descends to meet the herald-prophet. Another coming for confession and baptism, thinks John, and his stern heart quickens as he rises to meet him. But something in the stranger's appearance strikes and startles this rude, bold preacher of repentance; something that steals like awe over him. He, before whom princes and priests trembled and confessed, looking upon the stainless manhood, the solemn majesty, the features of this

Man before him, feels the moral power of simple and perfect goodness, and himself trembles and confesses. His prophet's eye not yet discerns the Messiah; he sees only the perfect Man, but, before the Master can say a word, he yields to him as the more worthy, and so far forgets his mission that he exclaims: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

"Suffer it to be so now," answers Jesus, "for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

John was never to be baptized; he was not to enter this kingdom, "for the least in the kingdom were greater than he"; he was only to open the door into the Kingdom, which door was this initiatory rite of baptism. Thus did Jesus come to the baptism, not that he had need of it as subsequent to confession, for he had no sins to confess, but he came that he might submit to every wish of the Father; that he might ratify the mission of John, and through this open door enter the Kingdom and publicly consecrate himself to his Father's business.

John leads Jesus unto the waters of the Jordan. And now the prophet is to receive the great witness that this is the Messiah, to whom later he is to bear record. Jesus comes from the baptismal waters praying, when lo! from the cleft heavens a stream of celestial light wings its way like a dove and settles upon him, while through the rent veil is heard, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus was like the burst of morning light upon the waking world. It illumined his soul. It flashed along his life's pathway, gilding with glory the ascent to the Mount of Transfiguration, piercing with a single ray the gloom

that wrapped the descent to Golgotha, and revealing in distant outline the dark arms of the cross against the whitening sky of the resurrection morn. The voice from heaven was the approval of his hopes; the confirmation of his convictions; the seal to his purposes. He came out upon the bank of the Jordan in the full consciousness of his being, his powers, and his mission. It was not a revelation wholly; it was, rather, the moment of perfect comprehension, and the tide of truth and purpose swept in such power over him that he was driven into the wilderness, where he could be alone and in calmness think through the mighty mission to which he had that day been called and anointed of God.

It was into some part of the wilderness from which John had lately come that Jesus was driven by the Spirit. Tradition points to a bleak mountain—now called Quarantainia—a little west of Jericho, as the height from which the tempter showed Jesus the kingdoms of the world. Here, in this barren, featureless desert, this desolate, dreary waste, among the dens of wild beasts, Jesus wandered without food and alone for forty days.

It was a prolonged period of mental and spiritual concentration and struggle, commensurate with the magnitude of the work he realized lay before him. Jesus went to the baptism in the Jordan of his own deliberate choice, but he was literally driven into the desert—as Mark graphically says—for these last days of special preparation.

The whole life of Jesus thus far had been a long fitting for his work as Messiah, but now, that the last step was taken and the infinite task loomed before him, he was naturally driven backward, where, from

a distance, as it were, he might see it in its true proportions; might measure his strength; and alone and uninterrupted might make ready with meditation and prayer.

But this was more than a period of meditation and prayer in final preparation for the work of the Kingdom. It was a period of real and intense struggle with temptation, victory in which was the inauguration of the Kingdom. Jesus consecrated himself to the mission of the Kingdom in his baptism by John, but in his baptism by the Holy Spirit and the approval of Heaven, he was anointed to the Kingship of the kingdom of heaven, and, before that kingdom could be established, he must of necessity meet in conflict and vanquish the prince of the kingdom of this world. Satan is that prince, and in founding the kingdom of heaven here Jesus was invading the domain of Satan, and as the second Adam, he must first conquer Satan, the enemy who overthrew the first Adam.

It was a real and terrible battle. Whether it was inward or outward, a subjective or objective reality, we shall not stop here to consider. Through all the ages the doctors have disagreed, and we prefer to close with our own questionings on this vexed and unessential point by believing that the reality was both inward and outward, for, in a nature perfect as was that of Christ and at a time of such intense spiritual consciousness, who can draw the line between subjective and objective reality? But the great essential here is that the struggle was real and powerful and personal, and that the victory was decisive and all important to Christ and the Kingdom.

But how could Jesus, the perfect and sinless man,

the Son of God, be tempted of the devil? That he was so tempted all the Gospels teach and every Christian believes, but "How was he tempted?" we are forced to ask. Was Jesus capable of sin? We believe our Lord was sinless, but would it add one whit to his divinity, would it be in any wise more reverential, more worshipful, to say he was incapable of sin; that it was divinely impossible for him to sin? No. But it would, on the other hand, detract from his humanity, it would entirely rob him of his humanity; it would make of his whole life as man a hollow lie, and it would leave us without a living Saviour, without a High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, "being tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

If Christ could not sin, then the conflict with the tempter in the wilderness was only the semblance of battle; his victory was a mere sham, and his captaincy of our salvation a hopeless mockery. "If we have to fight the battle clad in that armor of human free will, which has been hacked and riven about the bosom of our fathers by so many a cruel blow, what comfort is it to us that our great Captain fought, not only victoriously, but without real danger, not only uninjured, but without even the possibility of a wound?"

No, Jesus was tempted as we are, and his human nature was as vulnerable as ours, but it was so inseparably connected with his divine nature that through all his life he was tempted, yet he never sinned. He took upon himself our human nature as it was in the first Adam, free from the stain of sin, but capable in itself of sinning. He fought the tempter as we fight him, but he fought always victoriously, and, as man and Messiah, his victory has this twofold aspect: that

as he conquered we may conquer, and that every victory of his was a victory for us all.

Throughout the seclusion in the wilderness the tempter was with Jesus, but he waited for his final and fiercest onslaught until Jesus, weakened by his long fast and wearied with his ceaseless mental strain, should be least able to withstand the attack. Day after day, in this lonely desert, Jesus had brought in review before himself the whole future of his work. He saw its beginning and its end; he finally realized his divine Sonship with God; he knew that all power and wisdom had been given unto him in the gift of the Spirit; he knew the needs of Israel, their perverted views of the Messiah; he clearly saw that they would reject him unless he came to them as they had determined he should come—an earthly King, subduing by force all other kingdoms to his own; he saw the crown that might be; he saw the cross that would be, and he was tempted. Could he withstand Israel? Could he bear their scorn, their hatred? Could he be forsaken and denied of all men? Could he give up his life at last on a cross of agony and shame? But should he yield thus to despair and assert his own power? Should he yield to the popular desire and lead believing Israel from the Temple, call in the hosts of Satan and establish this kingdom by outward means at once and universal? Or should he submit absolutely to the will of God, plant the principles of the Kingdom in the hearts of a few holy men, be rejected and crucified by his people, and leave the fate of the Kingdom to God? So the question of his temptation becomes, in essence, the question of his absolute submission to the will of God. And this is at bottom the question in all temptation.

Thus, in these forty days, there was an unbroken contest with the temptation to a short-cut, a self-made path out of the uncertainty, the danger, and delay. On the last day, now completely exhausted in body, but with the memory and imagination abnormally alive, Jesus confronts the tempter. The evil one comes to him in subtle guise, saying: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." The devil does not question the fact of Christ's Sonship. He says: "Since thou art the Son of God, why dost thou suffer here? There is no need of thy being in want and danger. Use the miraculous power given thee! It is God's gift; does he mean for thee to suffer? What is thy power for?" How cunningly put!

Was it, then, God's will that he should suffer thus? Had not the Father bestowed upon him all power? Why should he then not yield to that voice and save himself? For a moment only do the words seem fair. They end with a hiss. A thousand draping veils cannot hide the serpent from the piercing eye of Jesus, and he answers: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Through the Father he had all power; power to turn these stones to bread; to supply all want; but had not the Father led him hither? Was not this desert God's? Was not his hunger God-appointed? Then would not God support him in the trial? Yes, and he would trust him for food, and in the trusting he submitted, and in submitting he conquered.

Foiled in his first attempt, the devil turns his defeat to its best possible advantage, and makes it serve as a feint with which to throw his Opponent off his guard

and open a way for a sure thrust home. This defeat gave him a clew to the spiritual mood of Jesus, and, adapting himself instantly and cunningly, he challenges this trust in God to the point of presumption, as a direct path for Jesus to the goal of the Kingdom.

The tempter takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem. They stand together on the high tower, from which the priest watches for the sun's first signal of the new day. It is morning now and the multitudes are gathered for the daily worship. The clouds of perfumed incense are rising, laden with the murmur of Israel's prayers for their consolation that he might even then descend from heaven to their midst. The sweet odor, upborne, floats in a cloudwreath about the Messiah, and the murmur of the prayers falls like the fall of murmuring waters upon his thirsty soul. It is the moment of the tempter's power. He whispers: "Now if thou dost trust God, prove that trust, dare to rely upon it; cast thyself down into the midst of thy people here, who bow in prayer for thy coming. Answer their petitions and by one bold miracle win all Israel and establish thy kingdom at once. Thou dost trust God? Is it not written"—quoting Scriptures for his authority, as Christ had done—"He hath given his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up?"

For a moment the storm rages. In a lurid flash the dread picture of the future is again before him. Once more he is rejected, spat upon, forsaken and in the agonies of death, while Israel derides. Once more the shadow of the cross falls dark upon the way the Spirit points. Does the Father mean for his beloved Son to tread that path? Is not this fear to cast him-

self upon God, to trust the Almighty, and fulfill at once his mission, a doubt in God's power? What shouts would greet him, what triumph, what glory would be his! But he knows the tempter. He knows that to cast himself from this height would not be trusting God, it would be wicked presumption, not God-directed, and would end in sin and death. And, again, submitting to the Father's will, he conquers, saying, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Beaten back, the devil is still undaunted. He has twice failed, but now makes his last and most desperate assault. It is conflict for eternal kingdom; the prince of darkness with the Prince of Light. From the Temple the tempter bears Jesus to the high peak of some lofty mountain. Not the Temple-court, not Jerusalem, not Judæa and Palestine, but the palaces, the cities, the nations and the seas of the wide world now unroll in splendor beneath them.

Sublime they stand, with vision bounded by the earth's great girth, and view the beauty, the power and the glory of the world. The world seems waiting at their feet. The vast sounds of living things, the thunder of cataract, the roar of metropolis, the long sweep of ocean, meeting, mingle in the upper air, and, like distant music, roll round the blue dome above them in a hymn of praise; from ten thousand valleys of verdure come soft winds burdened with the perfume of flowers of sweetest incense; and, over all, the morning sun, high hung in heaven, pours down deep seas of richest gold. "'Tis all mine," says the tempter. "Am I not worthy of praise? Son of God, one word from thee, one word of rightful homage, and I make all thine."

Satan's final and greatest effort! To hunger and

pride he had appealed in vain, and, staking all on this last thrust, seeks to pierce the armor of obedience with ambition and snaps his steel. The dazzling vision of the kingdom of the world below him—transcendently splendid to the eyes of the Perfect Man—pales and grows dim, for, lifting his gaze upward, the cloudy curtains that close before our mortal vision dissolve, and he catches the coming glory of the kingdom of heaven, and, turning to the cowering tempter, commands: "Behind me, Satan: . . . Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Obedient still, he conquers again, and the victory is won.

Beaten now, the evil one departed for a season.

"And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hoped success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God."

From the far battlements of that nether world Satan turned to look back upon the battlefield from which he had been driven, and lo! the "desert rejoices and blossoms like the rose," and as he gazes, angels, with the fruits of Eden, come winging their way and minister unto Him, who, "though He were a Son, yet learned obedience by the things He suffered."

". . . and as he fed, angelic choirs
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the tempter proud."

So the triumph is Christ's, not through self-asserted power; not in yielding to popular Jewish dreams; not in calling the legions of Satan to his aid; but through self-surrender in obedience to the will of God.

CHAPTER VI

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Judæa

THESE forty days were also days of temptation to John. At first his preaching wakened little more than curious contempt from the religious leaders in Jerusalem. He was one of the priesthood, they knew, but they thought him deranged with Essenic doctrines, and, like many another fanatic that these troublous times produced, would soon disappear. But his work continued and his power widened until all Palestine was astir and these leaders began to be alarmed; for while John was a Levite he was not preaching increased Levitical purity—the burden of Pharisaical teaching—nor, in fact, did his preaching have anything in common with any of the existing religious parties. Repentance and inward purity as a preparation for the coming kingdom was altogether a novel doctrine; and this, with the equally novel rite of baptism, was gathering a following that threatened to destroy the power of the present leaders.

“What does this mean? and what will be its outcome?” they asked. They must take some action immediately; and, accordingly, the Sanhedrin convened and selected a trustworthy deputation of priests and Levites to go down to John and investigate all this concerning him, get him into their toils if possible; but at any rate report at Jerusalem what measures might be necessary to check his growing power.

Of the three great religious parties—the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes—among the Jews at this time,

the Pharisees were oldest and largest. They had their beginning about the time of Jonathan, 160-143 B. C., and now numbered in their "association" about six thousand members. Their twofold object was: "To observe in strictest manner and according to traditional law all the ordinances concerning Levitical purity and to be extremely punctilious in all connected with religious dues." Tithing and Levitical purity were the basal obligations of their party, in the keeping of which they were fanatically exacting. They were extreme dogmatists, ritualists, and legalists. Their ceremonies were beyond number, a burden impossible to carry, a professionalism notoriously without corresponding inward—moral and spiritual—reality. To them belonged, not all, but most of the learned scribes—the copyists and interpreters of Scripture—and hence the Pharisaic party represented the "prevailing system of Traditionalism" and directed the greatest current of religious thought and ecclesiastical life.

The Pharisees, being extremists, soon roused a reactionary party within themselves, and hence arose the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not stand for a different religious sect—for both parties were within the synagogue—but, rather, a different faction of the same sect, the opposite school of thought. They were the more moderate, the more rationalistic thinkers, and tended into "broad and often grossly unorthodox directions." They were less formal, less hypocritical than their opponents, the Pharisees, but they were no more moral, being often openly lax and unpatriotic, preferring to drift with the ruling current. The Pharisee was ever an object of contempt, a butt of ridicule to the Sadducee—in fact, the official Pharisee

was generally recognized a "plague" long before Christ so witheringly uncovered them. "They torment themselves in this world without gaining anything by it in the other," said the jeering Sadducee with more of truth than reverence. The Sadducees were of the upper and wealthier classes and, of course, in the minority. The Pharisees, while separated by their vows from the vast middle and lower classes—out of which they came—still by their learning and zeal ruled those ignorant masses. But the Sadducee did not represent the civil and political side of Jewish life wholly, any more than Pharisaism stood wholly for its religious side. The leaders in the civil and religious life were drawn from both of these great parties and were found oftentimes outside of either.

Of the beginnings of Essenism we know nothing. In Christ's day they were a sect of about four thousand members, and marked still another extreme religious tendency of the time. They were Jews, but separatists, and outside the Jewish ecclesiastical body. In their exclusive and solitary community they were strictly ascetic and guardedly secret in all their doctrines. They too, like the Pharisees, sought purity, but their hedge from the unclean was an absolute withdrawal from all that was impure in itself. They repudiated marriage and lived as the monks of the Middle Ages.

The preaching of John had little of interest to the Essenes, since they stood outside of Judaism; and quite as little for the Sadducee, who never troubled himself greatly when a purely religious interest was at stake; but to the Pharisees, sticklers for law and tradition, John raised a thousand questions of dogma and ritual that were of vital interest.

The embassy seems to have reached him the day before Jesus returns to the Jordan from his temptation in the wilderness. This interval which had elapsed since John received Heaven's sign that the Messiah was come, had been a time of transcendent visions to the prophet and of intensest spiritual life. The glorious dreams of Isaiah, so long his hopes, are now realities. The King in his beauty is come. He to whom he has been pointing Israel so ardently and confidently is at hand. Now he "must decrease" while the King "must increase," for his mission of preparation is done. No one but "the greatest born of women" could possess such lofty humility. None other than John the Baptist could have met the questions of the Jewish deputation with such utter self-abnegation and simple honesty.

Again and again during these months John had answered their first question, whether he was the Christ, and now again he tells them no, but that he is merely the Christ's preparer.

"Then art thou Elias, who shall come and restore all things in a *new* Old Testament dispensation and by outward power?" they ask.

"I am not," answers John, "not the Elias you expect, for I come with no outward power. Repent and be pure."

"Art thou 'that Prophet' then who shall be in this new Covenant what Moses was in the old?"

"No! I am only one crying here repent, and prepare; I am only a forerunner."

"Who art thou, then, and by what *authority* dost thou teach, if thou art neither Christ, nor Elias, nor 'that Prophet'?"

This was the question most vital to himself, the one

over which later he stumbles when he sends to ask Jesus, *if* he was the One that should come. But now with the convictions of years, confirmed by what he has seen, he becomes a voice not to be questioned, but to be heard and believed, and he answers this last taunting inquiry of the deputation which was at the same time a temptation to his humility and faith, without hesitancy: "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, . . . for he was before me; . . . he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

Their snares are set in vain. The clear vision of the prophet, his absolute humility and his unwavering convictions carry him victoriously through his temptation, as the perfect submission of Jesus carried him through his fiercer struggle in the desert. The deputation departs, and the next day (Friday), as if in reward and in proof of his great faith and truth, Jesus appears on the bank again and John, looking upon him, exclaims: "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

It is to John, the fourth evangelist, who wrote it from memory years afterward, that we are indebted for this priceless narrative of the events that now follow in the days previous to the imprisonment of the Baptist.

It was Friday, the day after the deputation from the Sanhedrin returned to Jerusalem, that Jesus reappeared at Bethabara before John. By this time, very naturally, a little band of chosen disciples had gathered around the Baptist. They were mostly Galileans, simple, earnest men, among whom were John the Evangelist, and Andrew, and perhaps the whole

six of those who were so soon to become the disciples of Jesus, the small beginnings of his kingdom.

The spirit and faith of their leader had fallen upon these converts. They waited with his anxiety and hope the Coming One. They were not present that memorable day of the baptism of Jesus, but John had told them about it, and now they longed to see him for themselves. And soon they should. Even now Jesus was drawing near them. As he came along the river John saw and recognized him, involuntarily exclaiming: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" We do not know what effect this strange testimony of John had upon his disciples. Whether John himself knew the full and wondrous significance of his words, we can only guess. He had learned them from his prophet-teacher, Isaiah, but as he looked upon the face of Jesus he may have been carried by a wave of inspiration far beyond the limits of Judaism, and have seen in him the sacrificed Lamb of God to the whole sinful world.

The next day being the Sabbath, the rest day, Jesus remained near Bethabara. It was about ten o'clock that Sabbath morning—the fourth evangelist always reckons by Roman time, which is the same as our own—and John the Baptist is standing by the water's edge talking with two of his most earnest followers, Andrew and John. They listen eagerly as their teacher explains his strange exclamation of the day before. He is telling them, that he whom they saw yesterday was none other than the long-expected Messiah himself, when his words suddenly cease; he forgets his listeners, for Jesus again is approaching, and, all unconscious of any that hear, he once more bears witness that Jesus is the Messiah.

The two young men have not only heard John but now they see Jesus, and, as he passes, hardly knowing what they do or why they do it, yield to an irresistible impulse and follow him. John makes no protest. He sees them depart as the natural result of his teaching, as the only thing possible for sincere and serious-minded men in the presence of the Perfect Man. One look into the open face of Jesus and who of us can stay his steps? Jesus hears their timid foot-falls behind him and turning asks them as they come up: "What seek ye?"—a question that in various forms he asks of all who come to him.

"What seek ye?" They did not know fully. They had not thought of reasons. They came because they were drawn. But their pure motives, their reverence, and their faith are clearly attested, for they address him with the most honored title that they know: "Rabbi—Master—where dwellest thou?"

"Come and see," says the Master, and they go with him to the booth beyond the bank where he rested over the Sabbath.

Thus were the first disciples made, and thus the ministry is begun. How the imagination loves large liberty with these first hours of the discipleship! What a day for Master and learner was that first Sabbath! We know from one event how rich a day it was for Andrew and John, for they hurried away to find their brothers, to bring them to Jesus. Andrew finds his brother Simon before John finds James, and he tells him with joy and confidence that he has come to lead him to the Messiah. Doubtless Andrew had mentioned his brother to Jesus and told him something of Simon's nature, for, as they approach, Jesus, looking at that rude, impulsive fisherman, sees in him

the strong man of future days and greets him: "Thou art Simon the son of John—hereafter thou shalt win the name Cephas which means Peter, the rock."

On the following morning, Sunday, Jesus and the four leave Bethabara and begin their journey back to Galilee. On the way two more disciples are added to the little band. The first of these was Philip, a townsman of Andrew and Peter, and, like them, a fisherman. The appearance of Jesus and his invitation to join them won Philip forever. And now this new disciple is moved as Andrew and John were; he must find someone to whom he can tell the news, too good to keep. His chance soon comes. Along the highway ahead of them he sees a familiar figure seated under a fig tree. It is Nathanael of Cana—known to us later as Bartholomew—a friend of Philip's. Nathanael was reading as he rested, in a half-prayerful attitude wondering where these promises for Israel's deliverance would be granted. Philip has quickened his pace and now, before the others come up, stands in front of Nathanael with the answer to his very musings and prayers.

"We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

"The Messiah! Come? But who? the son of Joseph of Nazareth? Philip, can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Philip had already learned the way to make new disciples. He had an answer ready for this question, the best answer to every inquiry about Christ—"Come and see."

Nathanael came, and as he saw and heard the Master, without further argument or evidence, his

doubt and prejudice disappear and in free knowledge and perfect faith he confesses: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel."

So they journeyed on together, Jesus and the first six disciples, till they came to Nazareth in Galilee.

On reaching his home in Nazareth, Jesus found an invitation waiting him to attend a wedding that night (Wednesday) in Cana, to which his mother and the family had already gone. On hearing of this, one of the disciples—Nathanael-Bartholomew, who lived in Cana—urged his new-found Teacher to accept the hospitality of his home while there, and extended the invitation to the rest of the band. Accordingly they kept on through Nazareth, taking the broad road that leads away to the Sea of Galilee, for another hour's journey.

This road, this scenery, every mountain and plain, was familiar to Jesus and native to all his followers. They were all Galileans. The first miles of the way ran along the high ridge of the hills where the rugged landscape unrolled and rolled in ever-changing scenes beneath them with the unwindings of their tortuous path. Soon a sharp turn in the road brought them over the rim of a small but beautiful valley, whose gardens and orchards and grain fields, like garlands at the feet of a May Queen, were poured at the foot of a little city, which seemed to have grown tired as she climbed the terraced hill beyond, and, lying down to rest, fell asleep in the dreamful sunshine.

It is Cana of Galilee. Rather it is a picture of Cana, drawn from what we know of other Galilean towns, put back in its unchanged and ever lovely frame of Galilean landscape. Only the name and

meager history of Cana remain to us. Not a vestige of the ancient town can now be found, but in all probability it stood here where the village of *Kefr Kenna* now stands, about four miles northeast of Nazareth, on the road to the Sea of Galilee.

As soon as Jesus arrived in Cana and it became known that friends were with him, they too were asked to the wedding, which led to a peculiar and almost shameful embarrassment, relieved by Jesus in a miraculous and significant way.

A wedding among the Jews of Palestine, especially in Galilee, was a joyous and important event. It was little less than a holy sacrament; no higher conception of relationship was possible to the Jewish mind. This was the relation between Jehovah and Israel: He the Bridegroom; Israel the bride. Marriage was more than an honorable estate. It was a sacred duty urged and insisted upon by the Jews. And, naturally, the wedding day was the day of all days, and of wide, almost general interest. Anyone meeting a wedding procession must turn and join it joyfully for a distance.

The Jewish bride was always formally betrothed—sometime within a year—before she was married. To be betrothed the maiden must be handed a letter or a piece of money by her future husband—or by someone commissioned by him—the man promising to take her to be his wife. This betrothal is in all respects a *legal* marriage, but the two do not live together till after a second and more formal ceremony. On the day of this second ceremony—the true marriage—the festivities begin at twilight. The bride, completely veiled, is accompanied from her father's house by friends with music, amid showers of flowers and good wishes,

to the home of the bridegroom. He, amid similar demonstrations, comes out to meet her, and together all return to his home. Now the maiden is given to him as his wife—he signing a contract very like the vows we take—and after washing of hands and benediction, the great marriage-supper begins.

All this had been done at the home in Cana and the company was reclining about the loaded table. The meal was proceeding merrily. It was a humble home and the guests were few, but the hospitality was as lavish and the duty of unstinted abundance as sacred here as it was in the palaces of Jerusalem. The supper had been prepared with all care, but the arrival of the six guests with Jesus was so unexpected and so late that adequate provision could not be made for them, and before the banquet was finished the supply of wine began to fail. The supper went on. The hum of merriment around the long table grew every moment happier. But now the wine was all gone, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was superintending the serving, had become anxious and alarmed. What was to be done? A wedding feast without wine! It would be a lasting shame and disgrace to the wedded pair. Only the servants, besides her, knew the situation, but something must be done, and, coming up quietly behind Jesus, Mary whispers to him that the wine has failed.

It was a perfectly natural thing for her to do. To whom should she go, if not to her son? Who would be so likely as he to suggest a way out of the difficulty? He with his friends might be able to procure enough for the rest of the feast from some house near by, and a gift of wine on an occasion like this was not only in keeping with good taste, it was a right and generous

thing to do. Mary had no further thought than this. It is impossible for us to believe that she expected a miracle from her son. He had never done anything to lead her to think of a manifestation of such mighty power. All we know of Mary and of the quiet home life of Jesus is against such a supposition. The mysteries of his birth were still hidden in Mary's heart, but their meaning, not clear at the time, was less than ever understood at the end of these thirty years. Then, too, the perplexities of the hour were not so dire, nor the hazards of so vast import as to lead Mary to ask for such extreme help, had the impossible conception of a miracle entered her mind. Her half request was the simple, natural appeal of an anxious woman to a natural, trusted and loved son. Nothing more.

But the time had come when Jesus was to teach Mary the slow and painful lesson of his Divine Sonship and of his Heaven-ordained mission. He replies: "Woman"—not "Mother," for Jesus now speaks as the Son of God, the Messiah, not as the son of Mary, the carpenter—"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" There is nothing harsh nor disrespectful in this address. He could not have chosen a more lofty word than *Gunai*. Translated "Lady" and invested with all the grace and tenderness of Jesus, it might sound to us more nearly as it fell upon Mary. "What have I to do with thee?" had no sting of rebuke in it. Mary had done nothing to call for such restraint. This reply was simply the first attempt of Jesus to teach Mary that her meek and obedient Son was not *her* Son, but the Son of *God*; that his work had no connection with personal relationships, however near, but was from and for his Father in heaven; and that she

must now address him, not as Son but as Messiah. It was the first sharp thrust of that sword which Simeon prophesied should pierce her heart—the sword severing her human love, her mother's rights in this Son, whom she had never understood; whom, unaided, she could not understand, but whom she must realize to be Divine.

His words as usual filled her with wonder and awe, but something new in his manner now told her that he understood, and gave her implicit confidence in his help. "Whatsoever he sayeth unto you, do it," she said, turning to the servants. And they obeyed, filling to the brim with fresh water six large stone jars from which the guests had drawn to bathe, and then, at his further command, pouring the water forth to find it not water, but wine.

The first of Jesus' miracles! and like all his mighty works it was addressed to a believing and sympathetic few; done without self-assertion, or show of power; but naturally done, and for a wholly social purpose.

But this miracle was also a "sign." It was the sign of his approval of our natural, happy, human life; the sign of his power, his mission, and his personality. And his disciples seeing it, believed on him.

Jesus blessed with his presence and power the innocent joys of the Cana wedding, showing at the commencement that his ministry was not to be one of rigorous asceticism; that he had come not to imprison and limit life, but to give life and to give it more abundantly, purifying, beautifying, and enriching it. And his next significant step was in further proof of this. With his mother, brother, and disciples Jesus returned to Nazareth after the wedding and

from there moved down to Capernaum, to make that city henceforth his home and the center of his work.

The leprous shores of the Dead Sea, the desolate wastes of the wilderness of Judæa, the stony fords of the Jordan, blended well with the dread and doom of the fierce reformatory preaching of John; but for the good news of the gospel, for the message that would help men to be good and glad and hopeful, Jesus must go where men needed help, and so he chose for his preaching this busiest of cities, by this loveliest of waters, in this most fertile and populous of the plains of Palestine.

Capernaum was a recent city—cities came up in the night there as they do in our own West to-day—but it had eclipsed in importance all other cities in Galilee. It was on the border between the territories of the brothers Philip and Antipas and had a garrison and customhouse, but beside this it was the center of the trade of this industrious region about the Sea of Galilee. It stood well up along the northwestern shore some two miles from where the Jordan makes into the sea, and on the northern edge of the plain Gennesaret.

Every feature of this environment blended to make a landscape that was famed for beauty. The escarpment of distant hills in the eastward, whose ragged rim was the playground of morning sunbeams; the blue and limpid waters of the sea, flecked with a thousand sails; the beach embayed and edged with pearl and banked with oleander bloom; the green and teeming plain against the gentle slopes of the western hills; the warm, sweet air; the hum of busy life, might well have caused the rabbis to declare that of the ten seas placed by God in Canaan he chose the

Sea of Galilee only for himself; and with equal truth have led Josephus to call Gennesaret "the Crown of Palestine."

Capernaum was set in the midst of this enchanting loveliness. There was nothing wild, nor grand, nor gloomy in all the landscape. The hills across the sea, bare and torrent-scored, were softened by the blue distance; the sea, lying at the bottom of this basin, six hundred feet below the Mediterranean, would burst into sudden and fierce fury, but would as quickly calm and smile again; the heat at midsummer was withering and often fever-plagued, but springs of sweet water irrigated the ever-blooming plain, and during most of the year an even and almost tropical temperature prevailed; the blight of frost was rarely felt, and every month came laden with fruit or nut or grain of her own. The kingfisher and pelican lived like the fisherman on the rich life of the sea; and through the deep palm groves the soft, plaintive call of the turtledove could ever be heard. And mingling with all this, here rose the wide murmur of busy life. Four thousand boats, of many shapes and sizes, plied the sea; four great caravan routes led away in as many diverging directions; no less than nine cities stood along or near the seashore, and villages, we know not how many, and not one of which, says Josephus, had less than fifteen thousand inhabitants.

Such was the land into which Jesus came to preach. Here at Capernaum, with Peter, he made his home, and here did many of his mighty works. How changed is the scene to-day! Desolation shadows with her dark wings the once smiling land. The shell-strewn shores are dark and deserted, save for two staggering little villages, decrepit, degenerate, and

filthy. Not a single sail now dots the blue and still beautiful sea. Silence, solemnity and pathos brood over the lonely waters. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven! The jackal and hyena make there their foul lair, and *Tell Hum*, the heap of ruins, most dismal monument, marks where thou liest low. For "thou," saidst thy rejected Saviour, "thou shalt go down to Hades."

On this first visit to Capernaum Jesus stayed but a few days—only long enough to make arrangement for his mother and himself—and then left for Jerusalem, for the Jews' Passover was at hand and he must keep the feast in the Holy City.

CHAPTER VII

The Judæan Ministry: Rejected by the Rulers

IT was now April, 780 (27 A. D.), about three months after the baptism of Jesus. The time of the yearly feast of the Passover was at hand and the great caravans of pilgrims had begun to move along the high-ways. Taking his disciples, Jesus turns his face toward Jerusalem, that he also may keep the feast. The Passover commenced on April 11, but for a month now the preparations had been in progress all over the land. The roads and bridges were mended; the sepulchers were whitened that the pilgrims might avoid pollution; households put in order, and the stalls of the "money-changers" opened in every village and town.

The money-changers were a regular and accredited institution of the Passover, and they did a thriving business. Of the three yearly feasts, the Passover was most important, and as the only one many of the poorer people could attend, many made it the occasion for the tithing of their flocks, and for their purification, as well as for the payment of their Temple tribute. Every man of the Jews, rich or poor, was required to pay into the Temple treasury, as atonement for his soul, an annual tribute of half a shekel (about twenty-eight cents). Now, a large part of those in attendance at the feast was made up of pilgrims from every nation under heaven, and they brought not only their own tribute money but that of

their friends who were unable to make the long, expensive journey. Of course the money they brought was in the currency of their foreign lands, coin of many shapes, stamps, and values, but the law demanded that the tribute be paid in exact half-shekels of Palestine currency, and the trade for native coin was made through the money-changers, who charged a tax of five per cent for their trouble—and as much more as they could steal by haggling, false balances, and other chicanery. After the twenty-fifth of the month, preceding the feast, says Edersheim, these money-changers closed their stalls in the country and re-opened in Jerusalem within the precincts of the Temple itself.

Beside the money-changers, hundreds of mongers and trinketers blocked the streets and besieged the pilgrims with wares of every imaginable kind, while within and without the Temple walls, in every available nook, were the sellers of animals for sacrifice—doves for poor women, and sheep and goats and oxen for feast and thank-offerings. The whole festival was more like our country fair with the Temple as the “main building,” than it was like a sacred, religious ceremony. In the Court of the Gentiles—that is, within the sacred inclosure of the Temple walls—the traffic was at its height. The money-changers’ tables filled every space between the columns of the great porch, and the floor of the wide court was divided into pens for the animals of sacrifice, while piles of dove cages ran along every wall. All this was under the direction of the Temple officials. The press and the din of the place was frightful. Vendors scuffled and yelled and bickered; money-changers boggled and wrangled and clinked their coin; cattle lowed,

sheep bleated, doves cooed, and a noisome stench from the pens rose under the burning sun, while just within, the censor swung and the priests chanted their solemn prayers.

The hunt was on, the unholy pack in full cry, when Jesus entered the gate and was carried by the surging crowd into the very midst of the terrible desecration. His Father's house! This howling, groveling bazaar, this wheedling, cheating mart, this stinking sty, his Father's house! The priests allow and sanction this! He recoiled from the sight. His soul burned at the profanation. Seizing a bunch of cords he bound them hastily into a scourge, and in anger, sprang among the sellers of cattle and drove them in confusion toward the gate. Then the sellers of doves he commanded out and hurried them forward in front of the lash, and before the astounded mob realized what was happening, he strode into the porch, scourge uplifted and irresistible, threw down the tables, scattered the piles of coin underneath the trampling feet and whipped the cowering thieves like a pack of frightened dogs before him, while the multitude, spellbound for the moment, looked on in silent approval and wondering awe.

It was a bold, brave, royal deed. It was worthy any mighty hero of old. The holy fury swept all before it. He was about his Father's business now with true Messianic right and power. A thong of cords with his righteous might stung into shame and terror and flight a legion of guilty cowards. They fled, and not a single arm was lifted, not a single word was uttered to challenge or check this young Galilean.

They dared not. Their base, nefarious traffic they

knew was sacrilege, and not one of them could face this sweeping blast of indignation and protest. Nor dare the priests. They more than all others were guilty, and more than all were they dumbfounded and afraid. The people had long complained of this desecration, which brought wealth to the Temple treasury, and which, in their greed for the gold, the priests could not resist. This bold stroke of Jesus had won the multitudes looking on, and the arrest of him would have raised a tumult and brought a mob storming at the Temple doors.

Recovering from their shock, however, the Temple officials swallowed their shame and rage, and with characteristic cunning asked Jesus simply for a sign of his authority for this act. The most admiring and sympathetic of the crowd could not object to that. It was a crafty question. It was the opening of the conflict between Jesus and the rulers, which would later bring him to death. He knew it. His reply shows that he saw the final outcome. Looking around on the glittering gold, the glistening marble, richly wrought and carved, and measuring the massive Temple and the long years of its building, Jesus answered: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again."

It was a sign, but not the sign they asked, nor one they understood. It was to be a sign to them and to the enemies of Christ to the end of time. The rulers could not read the riddle, and in it was something of the hidden meaning that infuriated them. But they would not hear, nor would they see, and they withdrew nursing in their hearts this rankling offense until a day should come when they could use it against him.

And now the ministry of Jesus is fairly begun. It is significant that it opened with a renovation, a cleansing, and that of the very heart of religious Israel. The purging of the Temple probably took place before the first day of the feast, but throughout the week Jesus continued his Messianic work, curing the sick and doing other miracles that drew to him the attention of all Jerusalem, and won to him many believers.

None of these miracles are recorded, nor do we know of but one believer which they permanently made. The majority of those who believed, did so because they were dazzled by the sight, not because they understood the teaching of these "signs," and Jesus, reading with perfect insight the nature of their faith, knowing it would cease as soon as his miracles ceased, admitted none of them to the circle of his chosen disciples. He could trust the simple-minded, earnest-hearted Galileans, but to these gaping, fascinated wonder-seekers, he dared not commit himself.

To men of that day—quite the reverse of to-day—the common approach to religious truth was through physical manifestation—through miracle. They expected the miraculous, and many religious teachers were credited with supernatural power. But miracles like these of Jesus no one had ever done before. The contrast in kind and manner and purpose in these acts of Jesus to those of any other miracle-worker was so striking that not only did the sympathetic people believe in him but a learned and thoughtful member of the already-angered Sanhedrin was forced to confess that Jesus was indeed what he claimed to be, a Teacher sent from God.

That man was Nicodemus, a wealthy, influential

citizen of Jerusalem, a Pharisee and one of the three first officers of the Sanhedrin. He had watched with deep concern the doings of this young Galilean, and had become convinced that God was with him as he had never been with any other Jewish teacher. From the three glimpses of Nicodemus given us in the Gospels, we know him to be a candid man, timid and excessively cautious. But when we remember his social and official position, it is not his timidity, but his powerful convictions, his intense earnestness, and his real humility which strike us most forcibly. What bitter prejudice, what arrogant pride had to be conquered before this "master of Israel" would even admit his convictions honestly to himself. But the humility and compromise of a *visit* to this unlettered Youth from Galilee called for true heroism.

The streets of Jerusalem were deserted that night. A gusty storm-wind alone hurried through thin hollow darkness, stopping and starting and wailing at every corner like an invisible chorus of lost and grieving spirits. Jesus and his disciples were together in the upper room of John's house—for John lived in Jerusalem—and the Master, as had already become his custom, was unfolding to them the mysteries of the day's teaching. It is the first glimpse we have of this "upper room," so hallowed by the Master's presence. It was square and plain and bare, furnished only with table and benches. It was a sacred place, and secret, for here they could be alone. Only the wild wind rattled and beat at the door, which opened upon the outside stair at the back of the house. But suddenly there was a sound upon the stair of a footfall heavier than the wind's, the knock of a human hand at the door, and in walked Nicodemus.

The disciples drew back in the presence of this

gray and august personage. Not so Jesus. He receives the eminent Sanhedrist calmly, naturally, with only such deference as a teacher would show an earnest scholar. And Nicodemus acknowledges this relation in words that also tell why he has come, and all that he seeks to know. "Rabbi, we know thou art a Teacher come from God," and went on with the burning question, "Tell me, what is this kingdom of God and how can a man enter it?"

John has reported only the vital points of the conversation—just enough for the preservation of the great truth of the Master's teaching. Now Jesus, the Teacher from God, speaks to this teacher of Israel, words conveying ideas he never heard before, ideas that shocked and bewildered him. Jesus' reply was an uncompromising verity, new and startling, given with the authority of God. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"How can a man be born again? What is it to be born again?" asks the inquirer.

"Nicodemus," answers Jesus, "there is a spirit-world as well as a flesh-world, and birth is as necessary for entrance into one as into the other. That spirit-world I have called the kingdom of God, and you must have a spiritual birth into it before you can have a spiritual being in it. You must *be* before you can *become*. You cannot see nor understand this kingdom until you are spiritually alive. You are a Jew and a Pharisee; you have strictly kept the Law, but that gives you no more right to enter the Kingdom than any other man has, for you cannot earn that right by formal observance and outward acts. The right to enter is the gift of God. You may bring yourself to high mental and moral development, but

entering the kingdom of God is not doing more and better than you have done, not additional morality, not improvement upon your present goodness; it is infinitely more than that. It is a renovation so complete as to be like a new birth, it is the commencement of a new life in which your hitherto rebellious will is submitted absolutely to God, as subject to king. It is not more knowledge that you need, but more belief in God, a faith that will quicken your spirit with a moral power to live up to the knowledge you already have. The way for you to enter this kingdom is through the double door of John's outward baptism of water unto repentance and remission of sin, and by my inward baptism of the Spirit unto saving faith and loving obedience to God.

"Is it marvelous? Does it pass your understanding? Yes. But marvel not, Nicodemus, for, listen! Do you hear those voices of the night-wind talking at the corners of the house? Can you tell whence even that wind comes or whither it goes? So is the birth of the Spirit. You hear the voice of the new-born spirit within you, but the mystery of its birth and the secret of its growth are beyond your ken."

This was what it meant to be born again, but still the *how* was unintelligible, and Nicodemus must understand the steps of the process before he could believe, and he asks: "*How* can these things be?"

Jesus answers: "Nicodemus, are you a master of Israel and know not these things? I have told you of a transformation in human hearts that you can see for yourself, and you have not believed. How can you believe the greater mysteries of Heaven which I alone have seen and know? This kingdom of God, with all its benefits, is a kingdom of grace, the free

gift of God. The only way to enjoy its privileges is to take them as a gift, entering into them through faith. Do you remember that Moses lifted up a serpent in the wilderness, and that all who looked upon it, and saw in it God's love and mercy, were restored to health and life? So shall I be lifted up, and all who look upon me, and see in my suffering and death the infinite love and mercy of a Heavenly Father, and *believe*, shall receive this new birth from above, shall have this gift of eternal life."

Nicodemus departed alone into the night, not understanding the mystery, but believing the truth, and three years later he came with sweet spices to the tomb of this Galilean Teacher.

A few days after the Passover, Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem for some country district near by—probably the fords of the Jordan near Jericho—and there began to baptize. John the Baptist had in the meantime removed from this region and was continuing his work at Ænon, near Salim, "beyond Jordan." Ænon, it is believed, was the name of the springs in which John baptized, and Salim was a town near by; but neither site nor spring can now be found. The most likely situation, however, is west of the Jordan in Herod's territory, and here many authorities place them a little south of Scythopolis, in Galilee.

But now a tangle of other questions snarls our path. Why did John continue to baptize after the "Coming One" had come? Why did Jesus adopt in his Judæan ministry this baptism of John? How long did Jesus baptize and why did he cease? John preached repentance in preparation for the coming Messiah. He was to make Israel ready to receive

Jesus as her King. But Jesus had come and Israel was not yet ready to receive him. Many had repented and had been baptized from among the common people. The religious leaders, the officials of the nation (and hence the nation itself), self-righteous and deluded by their own false Messianic conceptions, still stubbornly held aloof.

It was in hope that these would yet repent and receive Jesus that John continued to preach. He no longer pointed to Jesus as coming, but as already come and urged Israel to accept him. It was still the period of preparation, and sharing John's hope, Jesus adopts John's method, in an attempt to bring the nation, through its rulers, to repentance and acceptance of him as its Messiah.

Jesus took no personal part in the baptism, but left that to his disciples, while he preached and taught. Many came to him, as they had come and still did come to John. The Pharisees soon heard of this work of Jesus and began to take measures against it. The report also reached John's disciples, and the great following of Jesus woke a bitter feeling of envy among the Baptist's converts, for they loved John and were jealous for his success. John heard their complaint, and once more, and for the last time, testifies that Jesus is the Christ, in words that are an unconscious testimony to the prophet's own grand character and large soul.

His work was nearly done. His life of hardship, of constant denial, and of loftiest devotion was nearing its dark and untimely end. He had labored, but labored, it seemed, in vain. Israel was still unrepentant. The longed-for Messiah had come, but his prophet and forerunner could have no share in the

joys of his kingdom. His work must now cease; his following fall away; himself grow less and less in the growing greatness of the Christ. It was a noble reply, exalted in its humility, and worthy of John.

The increasing hostility of the Pharisees was soon made known to Jesus, and at the same time rumor of the envy in John's camp came to him. It was plainly the signal to close his baptismal work. Instead of bringing the rulers to repentance, it was embittering them the more, and to continue this effort would be not only futile but dangerous. Then, too, if his popularity was becoming a hindrance to John, he had better withdraw and leave the Baptist an open field. So, with the half-dozen of his chosen disciples, he quietly retires from Judæa, passing through Jerusalem, and taking the direct route to Nazareth.

The Samaritans were hated by the Jews, especially by the Jews of Judæa; and the Jews, in turn, were hated by the Samaritans. A rancorous rivalry of long standing had mutually embittered them. The Samaritans were of mixed Jewish and Assyrian blood—more Jewish than Assyrian—and their religion was mixed like their blood—a spurious Judaism largely adulterated with the idolatries imported by the Assyrians. On the summit of historic Mount Gerizim, at the head of the vale of Shechem, was built their temple—at the time of Christ in ruin—which for ages had been the rival of the Temple at Jerusalem.

Samaria was regarded an unclean land and the high-caste Jew would not enter it, but in traveling north, took his way by the roundabout route through Peræa, along the east bank of Jordan. None of these small prejudices were felt by Jesus. Through Samaria

ran the most direct road to Galilee, therefore he chose that road. Samaria lies between Judæa and Galilee, extending north and south about forty-eight miles, and east and west about forty miles. It is less mountainous than Galilee, and more fertile than either Galilee or Judæa. Indeed, the plain of Samaria is one of the fairest and most fertile in Palestine. Soon after passing Shilo, the wide rolling plain opens before the traveler, and spreads away in rich fields and olive groves, to the feet of Ebal and Gerizim, seven miles to the north.

The time of this journey through Samaria must have been about the first of December. It was toward the middle of the afternoon that Jesus and his band entered the beautiful plain, and the early winter twilight was beginning to settle as they reached Jacob's Well. It was the close of a day of weary travel, and footsore and stained and hungry, Jesus stopped to rest by the well, while the disciples went into Sychar, about half a mile farther on, to buy food. John, perhaps, was left behind with the Master.

There are few shrines in all the land so identified with Israel's history as this well of the patriarch Jacob. It seemed to Jesus as if they were the shadows of the past, not those of the night, which were gathering about the well, as he sat there gazing upon the ruins of the Temple of Manasseh, which Gerizim lifted almost over him. Out from the dim vistas of that ancient time great figures once more came to drink of the well: Jacob, and Joseph, and Joshua, and Gideon, with the silent march of the years, when a human footfall suddenly broke the spell, and Jesus turned to see, not a shadow, but a living woman at the well-curb, come for water. He recognized her as

a Samaritan, and she as quickly saw that he was a Jew. Nothing more would have passed between them had Jesus been only a Jew; but he was more: he was the Messiah, and tired and thirsty, and as she let down to draw, he asked her for a drink.

The request surprised and shocked her. For a Jew to ask of a Samaritan, and that of a Samaritan woman, even a necessity of life was unusual, but to ask a favor, a cup of water, was unheard of. She was all astonishment. She forgot the request, forgot even her hate in her wonderment. She had never seen such a Jew before. There is something extraordinary about him, and aloud she says: "How is it—what is there in you different from all other Jews whom I have seen, that you should ask this favor of me?"

The first words of Jesus made this ignorant, sinful woman aware that he was more than a common man, and her question in essence is: "Who art thou?" It was just the question to wake all the soul of the Messiah. His thirst now was not to be quenched by the water she might give him, but by giving her to drink of another water. Gently, to her already quickened mind, he reaches down with an answer that shall lead her to the higher truth. "I am such an One, that hadst thou known me, thou wouldst have asked of *me* a drink, and I would have given thee living water."

"How can he? What does he mean?" Not understanding, yet conscious of a hidden and higher meaning, half-incredulous, half-anxious, she looks down the hundred feet of the well, then up at Jesus, and, blindly groping for the spiritual in the material, asks him, "How?" and if he is "greater than Jacob."

Simply, but with words which still lead her beyond herself, Jesus explains that "living water" is water which slakes all thirst, because it quenches every burning need of the soul, and becomes to him that drinks a well of water within, springing up into a new and everlasting life.

Still groping, though now believing his hitherto incredible words, trusting ignorantly that he would give it to her, whatever it was, she asks him for this living water, that she might never come here again to draw. She could get no deeper than the bottom of the well! no farther than her physical needs. Jesus could lead her no higher in this path. Why he now commands her to call her husband, we shall never fully know. But surely we may find one good reason in the effect it had upon the woman, namely, that it was the means of bringing her to grasp more fully who it was speaking to her, and what he would have her learn. The moment she discovered his supernatural knowledge of her sinful life, that moment she perceived him to be a Prophet, and that single perception so broadened the horizon of her childish soul that the highest and grandest of Heaven's revelations could be made to her.

Jesus answers her questions as to the right place to worship God, by telling her that Jerusalem, not Gerizim, was the place chosen by God, but forever seals that question for her, and for us, by pointing her beyond Gerizim, and beyond Moriah, to the temple of the heart, where the true worshipers of the Father should, from that hour on, worship him in spirit and truth. No such wide words as these had Jesus yet dared speak to his disciples. They could not understand. But still grander words this simple woman

was soon to hear. In what he said, she caught a glimpse of the glory of the coming Messiah and exclaimed: "I know that Messiah cometh. When he cometh, he will tell us all things." Then meeting the simple needs of this lowly, ignorant Samaritan woman, long before he could do it to his own disciples, Jesus makes the first full revelation of himself, saying, "I that speak unto thee am he."

Meantime the disciples had returned from Sychar and stood marveling that their Master should talk thus with such a woman, yet in their love and reverence for him they uttered no word. But now the woman was gone. Leaving her water-pot unfilled by the well, as the living water of a new life overflowed her heart, she hastened back to the city with her wondrous story, saying to the curious listeners gathering about her: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?"

The disciples had brought the food and now urged Jesus to eat. But his fatigue was gone; his thirst gone; his hunger gone. He had had meat to eat they knew not. After all these months with the Master they were so spiritually dull, so stolidly literal, that they wondered if someone had given him food while they were absent. With patience that never failed he explained: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." But what could a fallen Samaritan woman have to do with the work of the Messiah? His royal Messianic entry as the captain of Israel could not be yet. Divining these thoughts, Jesus looked out upon the newly sown fields and replied: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields [pointing

to the throng of Samaritans pouring out of the city], that they are white already unto harvest."

Two days he abode with the Samaritans, and many of them, through that woman's testimony, believed on him, but many more because "they heard him."

The short stay among the Samaritans was but a halt *en route* to Galilee. Jesus withdrew from Judæa, because the nation's rulers, instead of heeding his call to repentance, were growing more and more hostile to him, and it was his intention now, not to continue to baptize in Galilee, but to retire thither, and there wait the outcome of John's preaching. John was not yet imprisoned. He was still bearing testimony that Jesus was the Messiah, still calling men to repentance and baptism, but the storm of hate was gathering rapidly and was soon to break upon the fearless prophet with imprisonment and death. Jesus saw the storm coming. He knew what it meant for John, but so long as it did not burst, so long as John was able to point men to Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus himself could refrain from further active work and quietly wait the final issue of John's ministry. Hence, after two days spent among the open-hearted Samaritans, Jesus went on into Galilee, and came to Cana.

So far in Christ's life we have been able to trace the order of events with comparative ease. But from this point on, the Gospels cannot be wholly harmonized, and no two scholars altogether agree. We have the events, however, and they are vital: the sequence is a secondary matter.

His already great fame had preceded Jesus into Galilee. The Galilean pilgrims at the Passover had returned with the report of the purging of the Temple

and the miracles Jesus wrought during Passover week; the whole of Galilee had heard of John's great testimony that Jesus was the expected Messiah; his miracle at the wedding in Cana was still fresh in the memory of all; and now, with his name upon everyone's tongue, the Galileans began to believe that a really great prophet had arisen among them.

The news of Jesus' return to Galilee spread quickly. For years he had lived among them, unknown, but now many came to see him. The people of Cana went so far as to receive him publicly, with every mark of honor and respect.

Here in Cana Jesus stopped at the home of Nathanael, with whom he stayed on his first visit. He did not go to Nazareth now, for his mother was living in Capernaum, and he did not go immediately to Capernaum because he had returned to Galilee to rest, and he preferred the seclusion of little Cana to the busy rush of Capernaum. He sought Galilee for rest because here among his own people he would receive less attention and be less disturbed than in any other land, for he said, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." Here, for the time, Jesus dismissed his disciples, and they returned to their different homes and their fishing upon the sea.

CHAPTER VIII

End of the Judæan, Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

THE return of the disciples to their homes along the sea excited little if any attention, but it was doubtless through them that a certain nobleman of Capernaum heard that Jesus was up at Cana. The nobleman was an officer of Herod Antipas—generally believed to have been Chusa, Herod's steward. His son was critically ill. The anxious father had done everything possible to save the precious life, but all was vain. The boy was dying. The father had heard of Jesus of Nazareth, of the cures and miracles he wrought in Jerusalem at the last Passover, and the thought of seeking aid of the Great Teacher had occurred to him many times. But to Jerusalem and back was a week's hard journey, and his son was dying. But now he learned that Jesus had returned and was then at Cana, only twenty-five miles away. It was a last hope, and in sheer desperation the nobleman started immediately for Cana to see Jesus.

It was evening when he came into Cana. He found Jesus at once, told him his trouble, and begged him to come down to Capernaum and heal his son. The simple request showed great faith in Jesus, but it also showed the nobleman's very narrow notion of Jesus' real character.

He thought it necessary for Jesus to go to Capernaum, to the boy's bedside, in order to cure him. He took Jesus to be only an extraordinary Jewish miracle-

monger, a mere healer at the beck and call of everyone who could pay him for his trouble. It is to broaden and enlighten this man, to teach him who this Healer is, and what faith in him really means, that Jesus meets the nobleman's request with rebuke. It is not the request for the healing which Jesus rebukes, but the request for him to make the journey to Capernaum.

Jesus says to the man: "You are one of the kind that must see this miracle done with your own eyes, before you will believe. It has not occurred to you that I have power to heal your son twenty-five miles away."

It had not. It was a new thought to the man. A new idea of Jesus began to dawn upon the nobleman—the idea that this Jesus might be more than a mere healer, that he might even be the Messiah. If this was the Messiah, it would require only the cure of his son from this distance to convince the nobleman. Nay, it would not require even that, for, as he looks upon the face of the Christ, his faith overleaps his sight, he takes Jesus at his word, and departs, believing his son is restored.

He slept that night in Cana, free from anxiety and dread, and with the morning started joyfully homeward. When nearing Capernaum, the servants of his house came out to meet him, bringing the glad news of the cure, which he, in his heart, was already assured of. To his inquiry, the servants said it was in the early evening of the day before that the child began to mend, and the father knew that it was the very hour when his faith in Jesus made it possible for the Saviour to say, "Thy son liveth."

It was enough. Not the son only of that household

was saved. The parents, and the whole house believed now in Jesus, not only in the power of Jesus.

All this happened soon after Jesus returned to Galilee—in December, 27 A. D. The next four months Jesus spent in retirement, neither teaching nor healing, and with none of his disciples about him. Throughout this period John the Baptist continued to push his reformatory work, but instead of winning favor, he was rousing more and fiercer opposition.

"After this," says the evangelist John, "there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." This feast is popularly called the "unknown feast," for the reason suggested in the name. Of the great yearly feasts—Purim, Pentecost, Passover, Tabernacles, Day of Atonement, feast of Trumpets and feast of Word-gathering—each has some advocates as being the unknown feast. It is an important datum, as it fixes the order of the events we have just considered and the time of much that follows. For many reasons we believe it to have been the feast of Passover, which occurred in early April, 28 A. D.

Jesus went up to this feast alone. He was soon to call his disciples into active work, but he did not need them yet. Once more he enters the Holy City; once more he stands within the sacred walls of his Father's house. But now, as never before, the worldly pomp, the stifling ceremonialism, the glittering unreality to which the worship of his Father had degenerated, oppressed and smothered him. He could not worship the Father with these cumbersome, choking forms. And these priests of the Temple, these teachers of Israel, who twisted and divided and hedged the Law, who looked for salvation in the trifling and

ingenious niceties of their endless and hair-splitting discussions, what did *they* know of the real worship of the Father? and what could they understand of the truth and mission of his Son? This was still his Father's house, but his Father's business was no longer here, and out of the Temple Jesus went; out of the heavy incense-air, into the Sabbath sunshine of the streets; out from among the long-robed, praying priests into that quarter of the city where were the suffering and poor. Toward the Sheep-Gate he went, till he came to the Pool of Bethesda.

What a sight was here! Here was his Father's business. Within the five porches which inclosed the pool lay a multitude of sick people, desperately intent on watching the water. They were afflicted with many diseases—an ignorant, suffering crowd, gathered here because at a certain time the "waters were troubled," and an old and popular superstition said an angel caused the troubling and that only the first sufferer to get into the water then, would be healed.

This was a mineral spring with some medicinal properties, but it was also a common intermittent spring, and its "troubling," instead of being due to angelic visitations, was the bubbling up or boiling due to physical causes. But even the more enlightened of that day were grossly ignorant of all natural phenomena, and attributed everything of such nature to supernatural agencies. This superstition was so general that it crept into the text of John's Gospel. The Revised Version rightly omits the interpolation.

It was a painful scene of misery and degradation—the misery of body and soul. Hundreds of diseased, lame and blind, suffering and waiting; filling the air with their piteous moans! And this was the day of

the holy Sabbath? Was there rest or peace in one of those bent and wasted bodies? This was the day God had set aside for hallowed and beneficent works? Here were the weary and suffering under the very shadow of God's holy Temple—so close that their cries for help might almost have been heard by the chanting priests within the Temple's walls. Here by the pool Jesus saw the appalling picture of Israel's need in body and soul; yonder in the Temple he saw the no less appalling picture of Israel's self-seeking, her mistaken, narrow, and lifeless literalism.

None of the sufferers noticed Jesus' presence among them. All were intent on watching for the troubling of the water. Jesus threaded his way among the prostrate crowd, until his eye rested upon the most sorely afflicted of them all. He was an old man, friendless and helpless. For thirty-and-eight years he had been coming there, trying to get into the water, and ever seeing someone step in before him. He was a wretched object, suffering the terrible consequences of his own sin, and so the very one to wake the most of pity in the Saviour's heart.

"Wouldest thou be made whole?" asks Jesus, looking down at the old man. The miserable creature had ceased to hope. He lay there because he could do nothing else. The question made him only the more conscious of his condition and started him upon the tale of his woe. Jesus cut him short with a command that thrilled every withered fiber of his body with a new life: "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." And he arose by the spoken power of Jesus. Even while he took up his bed Jesus had quietly withdrawn.

Forth from that porch of superstition and pain

went the healed man, feeling for the first time in thirty-eight years the meaning of Sabbath rest. Through the streets he went, carrying his bed, unconscious of its being a burden; forgetful that the law called it a burden, and made it a crime to carry it on the Sabbath. But jealous eyes were upon him. The Jews saw him carrying his miserable little pallet through the streets, and he was soon surrounded by an angry, accusing mob. They recognized him immediately as the lifelong paralytic at Bethesda; they wondered at his cure; but they were angered at his breaking the law; and what they demanded of him was not who healed him, but who had dared command him to carry his bed and desecrate the holy Sabbath.

The Sabbath law was the great fundamental of Pharisaism. It is almost incredible that men could ever seriously busy themselves to the preposterous extent of making a Talmudic Sabbath law. These tractates of the rabbis on the Sabbath law are the most intolerably complicated, incongruous, exaggerated codes of small morality and artificial religion that the ingenious mind of man has yet devised. The Sabbath law, ordained for a boon and a blessing to men, they had elaborated into a grievous number of chafing minutiae, making it a bane and a burden. They had lost the inward life and spiritual meaning of religion, and had exaggerated the importance of its outward forms, till this great law was degraded into a national fetish.

So the healing of this impotent man was a gross infringement of the Law—no, not of *the* Law but of *their* law—it was, to them, no less than heresy, the cry of the narrow, bigoted literalist against the quash-

ing of his shallow, pedantic interpretations of religious truth by Jesus himself, the greatest heretic, the most unorthodox of all that long line of brave, broad, truth-loving, truth-bearing class.

The healed man did not know who had cured him, and could not tell the Jews. But later on Jesus met him in the Temple and there made himself known to him, opening his eyes to the spiritual meaning of the miracle, and thus, as he so often does, reached and healed the man's soul through his body.

The man now told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him, and the rabbis summoned the Healer before their council to warn him against further action of this kind. This was the opportunity Jesus sought. Now he would teach *them* the meaning of the miracle. Majestic and calm he confronts his enemies and tells them the meaning of the Sabbath, and reveals to them, plainly and fearlessly, for the first time, his Messianic character.

Such words enraged them as no other words could. Blasphemy most flagrant! Death to the impostor! Then and there they vowed that he should die at their hands; but they dared not touch him now. His very presence overawed and restrained them, and they suffered him to depart. Leaving Jerusalem, he took his way back to Galilee and closed the Judæan period.

This was April of the year 28 A. D., the end of the first year of public work. It had been little more than a year of waiting. Scarcely any active work had been done, and nothing permanent accomplished. Through their ecclesiastical rulers Jesus had declared to the Jewish people, in word and deed, that he was their promised Messiah, but the nation, as a nation, had

refused to believe. Both Jesus and John had sought to bring the nation to accept its Messiah through the gate of repentance and baptism, but the Jews rejected him and had now openly condemned him to death. More than this, they had brought down the wrath of Herod Antipas upon John, and imprisoned him in the fortress at Machærus.

This, then, was the situation: John was in prison and could no longer bear witness of Jesus; the nation, through its religious leaders, the priests and Levites, had refused to accept Jesus as Messiah, and had determined to kill him. Rejected by the Jews, Jesus must now reject them; their old Covenant relations must cease, their Mosaic institutions disappear, their priesthood and Temple be destroyed, and upon a new Covenant be built a new Temple—the Universal Christian Church.

It was with this in mind that Jesus returned to Galilee after the “unknown feast.” We believe it was just before this feast that John was imprisoned, and perhaps it was during the feast that Jesus heard of it. John’s preaching had been wholly reformatory, but now Jesus could no longer call the people to repent and to continue to preserve their old institutions. Nothing remained for Jesus to do but to start again his Messianic work upon the basis of a new Covenant, to establish new and universal institutions, to found a new kingdom—the kingdom of God.

Here, with the close of his first year’s ministry, is distinctly the end of the old Covenant and the beginning of the new, the plain break between Moses and Christ. It is at this turning-point that the first three Gospels take up Christ’s work; passing over the Judæan ministry because it failed completely and con-

tributed nothing to the founding of the New Kingdom. Thus Jesus, the promised Messiah, came to his own, but his own received him not. Now he will return to Galilee, gather about him a band of disciples to instruct and train for future work, and there begin to lay the foundation of his universal kingdom of God. "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is to become the head of the corner."

It was back to his own Galilee, back to the despised lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, that Jesus now went; and Isaiah's prophecy began to be fulfilled:

"Galilee of the Gentiles,
The people which sat in darkness
Saw a great light,
And to them which sat in the region and shadow of
death,
To them did light spring up."

The road to Galilee, over which we have already traveled with Jesus, ran by Shilo, through Samaria, by way of Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee. It was Friday when Jesus reached Nazareth, and as his married sisters lived here, he determined to stop with one of them, and spend another Sabbath in his native village (Luke 4. 16).

His arrival was quickly heralded about the town, and on the morrow the little synagogue was crowded with his townsmen, curious and expectant. They knew about his miracles; they had just heard what the rabbis at Jerusalem had done to him; and now they were anxious to test him, whether he could do at home among them what he had done at Capernaum and other places. Every eye was upon him in

the synagogue, for he was naturally expected to be called upon to take part in the service.

The synagogue is an outstanding feature in Jewish life and history and was a potent factor in the establishment of Christianity. If possible, the synagogue was built upon the highest point of land in the town and was so placed that its congregation always worshiped with their faces toward Jerusalem. The men and women worshiped at the same time but were separated by a gallery or screen.

There was no regular clergy for the synagogues—the priests and Levites had to do only with the Temple—but it was cared for and its services performed by the elders of the town, one of whom was chief. The chief elder selected from Sabbath to Sabbath those who were to read from the Law and Prophets and conduct the prayers, and one who should act as “minister to the congregation and deliver the sermon.”

The order of services was as follows:

First, two short prayers were said by the leader, followed by the *Shema*, or Creed, and another prayer. Then, standing before the ark, in front of the congregation, he would repeat six short benedictions interspersed with impromptu prayers, as occasion might call forth, with the priestly benediction preceding the last of the six. This liturgical part over, there followed the reading of the Law and Prophets; then the sermon—if some great rabbi or distinguished stranger who was capable of delivering a sermon might be in the town—and the service closed with questions and discussions among the congregation.

Before entering the synagogue the chief ruler had requested Jesus to read the service that day and

address them. This was a high honor, and it was usual to hesitate, with mock modesty, before accepting it; but Jesus showed none of this. He was all intent on his Father's business and he took this opportunity with the utter self-forgetfulness of his intense soul. He ascended the *Bima*, or platform, and performed the service as they had never known it done by scribe or priest. The familiar prayers, the oft-repeated benedictions, glowed with new truth and beauty as his fervent spirit crowded into them, struggling for utterance.

The lessons from the Law were read, and now, from the ark, the Book of the Prophets was handed him. He unrolled the parchment scroll, until the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah fell beneath his eyes. It may have been the regular lesson of the day, or it may have been the inspiration of the hour—"the spirit of the Lord"—which led him to this striking and beautiful passage for the text of his first Messianic sermon, particularly fitting the occasion and his sermon. He read only the first and a part of the second verse, then handed the roll back and sat down as by custom to deliver his discourse.

There is a stir of suppressed expectancy in the congregation, which lapses into silence as he begins to speak. Now their interest passes into hunger. Spellbound they listen. Words so strange and sweet, so beautiful, so hopeful, so masterful, they have never heard. The voice, the face, the thoughts are matchless and overpowering. They drink in the good news of hope and promise as it flows from the soul of the preacher. He pictures for them the year of God's jubilee, and the Messiah at hand, and all his attendant blessings; then catching the glowing rays of his

gracious message, as sunlight is gathered into a crystal lens, he focuses them all upon himself in this burning conclusion: "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears," and there stands Isaiah's promised Messiah!

The congregation had become as one: swayed and mastered and carried beyond themselves, by a former neighbor and fellow townsman—Jesus, the carpenter, Son of Joseph! The hush of the sermon was finally broken by the usual after-comment. Jesus waited to answer questions, hoping someone had been led beyond the common contempt of familiarity to see the real personality of their former townsman. But no prophet is acceptable in his own country; no one saw the Messiah in Jesus. They only marveled that Joseph's Son, illiterate and lowly—one of themselves—should speak with such power and authority. They caught nothing of his divinity; they understood nothing of the sermon's spiritual teaching. His sayings, marvelous, and these they heard; but now let him work some of his marvels that they might see.

Jesus knew what was in their hearts and forestalled their curiosity with a stern and bitter reproof that turned their already jealous wonderment into rage. It was enough that he should presume to teach them; but to dare rebuke them as less worthy of favor than lepers and Gentiles lashed them into fury. Away with him! and they rushed upon him, dragged him from the little synagogue, and up through the stony streets to the cliffs, to fling him headlong to death.

In sorrow Jesus submitted to their brutal passion till the overhanging cliffs were reached. Turning suddenly upon them with that look which had dismayed the nation's rulers in the Temple, he checked

their mad rush. They, calmed and cowering, fell apart, while he passed through their midst unharmed.

Powerless to help them because of their unbelief and sad with pity, Jesus left the mob of his aforetime friends and neighbors, standing awestruck upon the cliffs. From these hills he had loved, from these people of his own village, among whom he could never hope for honor and acceptance, he must depart. He set his face toward Capernaum, a day's journey from Nazareth. He taught in Cana, and wherever opportunity offered, as he went along, stopping in those little villages that grew more numerous as he drew near the fertile plain of Gennesaret and the sea. When he finally entered Capernaum it was with a large following of villagers, anxious to hear him.

It was morning along the glorious sea, new and beautiful after a night of storm. The slanting sunlight pouring over the purple waters soothed them into dreamy calm. Jesus passed along the pearl-paved beach, by fishermen and their boats, until he stood in front of four young fishermen whom he recognized. Their boats were drawn upon the beach and they were busy casting their nets into the water, washing them after the night's fishing. It had been a night of fruitless toil. A severe storm had driven the fish into deep water, their boats were almost unmanageable, and they had caught nothing.

We too recognize these four young men. They are the four who accompanied Jesus from Bethabara after his temptation—Simon and Andrew, John and James. It was four months back, in December, that the little band of followers left Jesus at Cana and returned to their fishing. Up to that time they had

been mere friends, following Jesus without thought of making his work the sole business of their lives. But now Jesus has come to call them to permanent discipleship, to leave forever their boats and nets, to forsake all and follow him from this bright morning on through all the dark days that follow.

Bending over their work, they had not noticed the Stranger, until the gathering crowd began to press upon them. There was only a moment of greeting between them, for a multitude was collecting on the beach, crowding Jesus to the water's edge in eagerness to see and hear him.

Stepping into Simon Peter's boat, Jesus requested him to push off a little way from the shore. From there the Master spoke to the people on the shore: the good news of the gospel; the love of the Father; the glories of the Kingdom; their needs; their new hopes. Sweet and soft as the lisp of the waves along the shore fell his words upon them, and his promises filled all their hearts with hope.

Peter and Andrew the while sat in the boat with Jesus, strangely stirred by his teaching. Jesus knew the hour had come when he could call these fishermen from their nets to himself. They had toiled all night in the *sea* and caught nothing, but here upon the *shore* was a throng hungry for hope and truth, and now they would understand the meaning of his call to become fishers of men.

Closing his discourse, Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deeper water and let down his net. But this the two brothers had been doing the long night through without a fish for their labor, and they were weary and discouraged. Jesus knew it. Peter need not have hesitated nor explained before obeying.

However, he let down the net, playing it out with little hope, when, lo! the lead-line had hardly fallen, ere such a school of fish struck the net that it began to break. John and James rowed hastily up to assist, and both boats were loaded till the water poured over the gunwales.

For the time the excitement of the haul prevails over all else; then, like a flash the wonder of it bursts upon Peter. What did it mean? Who is this, who penetrates the deep waters? The Messiah! and as he sees into their dark depths, so he looks into his own unworthy heart. Falling at the Master's knees he exclaims, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But pointing to the shore, still black with people, Jesus answers: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

"When they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."

We have already had a picture of Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus, as we saw, chose Capernaum for the center of his Galilean work because of its geographical position. It was the industrial focus of Palestine, as well as the most fruitful bit of country within the limits of the land. Here the soil was fertile, the waters teemed with fish, population was dense, and travel and trade centered. Here were many men, and easy of access, and here Jesus made his home.

Over the great caravan routes which intersected at Capernaum Jesus could readily visit all parts of Galilee to the west; along the Jordan valley he could go north into Trachonitis; and by means of the sea he could cross into Decapolis and Peræa on the east

and south. Thus Capernaum made an admirable station for the center of his work in Galilee. The character of the Galilean ministry was very different from the ministry in Judæa. Jesus no longer called men to come to him; he went to them. He now became an itinerant minister with regular circuits from Capernaum into all the surrounding country. He made a systematic visitation of the towns and villages, "preaching in the synagogues through all Galilee," as we saw him in the synagogue at Nazareth. The circuits began at Capernaum, extended over days or months as the circuit was short or long, and ended, as they began, at Capernaum, where his having to pay tribute money, proves him to have been a legal resident of the city.

It was in the latter part of the week that Jesus called the four disciples to him, and before dawn on the first day of the next week he left Capernaum to begin his itinerant preaching in Galilee. But during the first brief sojourn in Capernaum there was one Sabbath, and Jesus preached in the synagogue. It was a great day of teaching and "good works," the account of which is very fully preserved by the evangelists, as an illustration of the way the Master's days were spent.

CHAPTER IX

Jesus Received by the Common People: Opposed by the Rulers

THE Sabbath came. The silvery dawn was deepening into golden morning when Capernaum awoke. The sun never looked down upon a lovelier scene. Not a keel cut the calm bosom of the sea; not the whirr of a wheel, not the stroke of a maul broke the hush of the holy day which brooded like a benediction over city and sea and plain. But the Jewish Sabbath was a festal day, and there was a stir of preparation in every house.

The dew was still fresh upon the roadside grass, when, by one accord it seemed, the roads and streets were alive with people, all hurrying—many even running—to the synagogue. It was the hour for morning worship, and it was a meritorious thing to run with quick steps to the synagogue in pursuit to know the Lord!

There was more than the usual hurry to-day, for Jesus, the young Prophet of Nazareth, was to read the service and deliver the sermon. Every one in Capernaum knew about him now and all were anxious to listen again to his exalted teaching. Up to this time there was no rabbinical prejudice against Jesus in Capernaum; the spies of the scribes and Pharisees had not yet followed him from Jerusalem; and the simple-minded trades-people of Capernaum had not broken the spell of their wonder, to question the motives or

the lawfulness of his doings. He was his own authority and that more than satisfied them. He cited no learned rabbis; he appealed to no traditions, as the scribes did when they taught. There was none of the scribe's hollow rhetoric, no mazy logic, no microscopic quibblings in his sermon. He was original and wholly independent, addressing the hearts and consciences of his hearers, simply, earnestly, directly, powerfully, with the authority of a complete understanding of their needs and a consciousness that he was all he preached—the incarnation of the perfect ideal which he held up to them.

It was this striking contrast to the teaching of the scribes—they taught *by* authority, he *with* authority—that filled the Capernaum congregation with amazement. But amazement at the teaching of Jesus was suddenly re-enforced by astonishment at his power. He had not yet finished speaking when there was a fearful scream in the congregation, the frenzied yell of a madman: "Ah! What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God!" A chill of horror shook the congregation like an ague. One of the demonized was among them!

The unhappy wretch, possessed, we know not how, with a second and evil personality—possessed by unclean spirits, devils they were supposed to be, which temporarily maddened him—had entered unobserved into the synagogue. There was no asylum for those strange unfortunates, and they wandered at will, the terror of all, living in the tombs or making their lairs like beasts in the dens and caves of the mountains.

This "possession by unclean spirits" may have been a kind of demonized hysteria, bordering on insanity,

and kindred to some of those disorders of mind and will of our own day, successfully treated by faith doctors.

The demon in the man, like all moral evil in the presence of Jesus, felt the absolute power of his purity and was forced to own him master—in the same breath demanding in terror that he be let alone. He called him the Holy One of God, but Jesus would have no such witness to his divinity and Messiahship, and turning upon the raving maniac he bade the demon hold his peace and come out of him. "The devils believe and tremble," and these did more—they obeyed. Seizing their victim in a last wild struggle, they threw him to the ground, tearing and screaming in a paroxysm of convulsions, and fled.

It was all over in a moment. The sufferer arose with the calm upon his haggard features, and with a new light in his eyes, kindled by a mind restored.

"But what is this? A new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!" said one to another as they looked with awe upon the cured demoniac. Confused and dumb with amazement, the congregation broke up, and the report went hurrying from mouth to mouth through Capernaum and far into the surrounding country.

It was the noon hour, but the day's work had only begun for the Master. Quitting the synagogue, he went home with Peter for the midday meal, but instead of the Sabbath feast he found the windows darkened, the house closed, and was told by the anxious household that Peter's mother-in-law had been stricken with the "burning fever," so common during the spring and summer in that low-lying valley.

Going into the sick woman's chamber, he bent over

her, and as he rebuked the demons that morning, he now rebuked the fever, and taking her by the hand, he raised her up, restored. And then, says the Gospels, "She ministered unto them."

The sun was sinking behind the Galilean hills, and the long shadows were running across Gennesaret to the sea, telling the Sabbath was past. It had been a day of suppressed excitement in Capernaum. There had been many witnesses to the cure of the demoniac; all had heard of Simon's mother-in-law; and a great hope had come with the wondrous news into every afflicted home. The law forbade any to go further than two thousand cubits from his home on the Sabbath, but now evening had come, the Sabbath was past, and one might go where he chose or carry what burden he wished.

And what is this in the streets? From every quarter of the city comes a throng, crowding around the door of Peter's home; hither the blind are being led; the lame and crippled are carried; the palsied are borne; the fever-stricken brought; and there in the arms of friends is a struggling demoniac; and others and still others—children and the aged, in beds and blankets and hammocks, being laid upon the ground in front of the door. The street is covered with them; the narrow road is blocked with them; all beseeching him, whose authority even the demons own, to rebuke their diseases.

Here we have a picture of the world he had come to save. Here is one day's ministry. The sickness, the misery, the want and woe of the city—a piteous multitude—gathered in an agony of hope before him! Through the throng the Master goes, rebuking, touching, cheering, restoring; feeling in his infinite sym-

pathy the agonies of all as he takes their infirmities and bears their diseases.

The evening dusk had departed into night and the stars had long been out, ere the last sufferer was made whole, and the Great Physician rested from his day of labor—his first Sabbath in Capernaum.

Very early the next morning, while it was still dark, Jesus rose without disturbing any of the sleeping household, and passed quietly into the street, crossed the city, and went out to a wild and secluded place to pray. It was in the solemn silences of the night and amid the wide solitudes of the hills, that he held deep and prolonged communion with the Father as the preparation for some great undertaking.

So it was now. Jesus sought this early retreat from Capernaum, not alone for a season of prayer, but for a beginning of his synagogue ministry in Galilee. He had revealed his power and truth to Capernaum, and he knew that unless he secretly departed from the people, it would be impossible to move for the crowds that were sure to flock about him after such a day of healing. He had a mission to more than the people of Capernaum. He had come with a gospel for all men, and his plan was to preach to them in "their synagogues throughout all Galilee." He must not be delayed by wonder-loving crowds.

Another reason led Jesus to withdraw to the hills before the morning came: he knew the Sanhedrin had its spies upon his track, and that he must get a hearing in the synagogues before these enemies could poison the people and shut the doors against him. He dare not lose another day before he begins his circuit of preaching.

He had judged the people rightly. Hardly a flush

of dawn had tinged the east when there was a clamor in the streets, and Peter woke to find his door again besieged by visitors calling for Jesus. He went to rouse the Master, but found him gone. No one had seen him, and, not a little alarmed at his disappearance, the disciples began an anxious search for him through the city.

Meantime Capernaum was all astir. Early as it was, the people were in the streets; crowds came pouring in along every highway, and the multitudes promised to be greater than the day before. When Peter found Jesus, he told him, with truth, that all were seeking him, and urged the Master to return to the city.

It was a very natural request, as Peter then understood the mission of Jesus. Why should the Messiah not take advantage of this popularity to rouse all Israel, and take David's throne at once? Peter did not know that he was echoing the devil's words; that he was another tempter; that this was another wilderness. But Jesus had already fought and conquered that glittering possibility in the wilderness of Judæa, and though it ever recurred to tempt him its power was forever broken. The hour of calm, refreshing prayer had restored him, and instead of returning as they wished, he now made known to the disciples the large plan of his synagogue ministry.

"No," said he in reply to Peter, "we shall not go back to Capernaum to-day. Let us go elsewhere, unto the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth."

And they started directly for the next town—Chorazin, a little village among the hills, two or three miles distant.

This was the beginning of the first of four circuits of preaching that Jesus made among the synagogues of Galilee, while Capernaum was his home and center. What towns these "next towns" were, besides Chorazin and Bethsaida visited during this first circuit, we do not know. Nor do we know how long this journey lasted; at most we are informed of only one definite act during this first circuit—the healing of the leper.

That Sabbath at Capernaum was an index of the days that now followed. We may take it as a fair sample of the way Jesus spent his time during his missionary work in Galilee. On Mondays and Thursdays, the regular market days, the synagogues were open and Jesus had a chance to preach to the country people as they came to town. He preached and taught and healed as he went from town to town, and his fame rang throughout the land. One dread affliction that he had not yet cured—leprosy.

The Jewish doctors, spiritual and medical, prescribed for all forms of disease save leprosy. They had yet no simple, no charm, no incantation, no magical formula for leprosy. The miracle-monger refused to work his spell upon a leper. The infection was beyond all knowledge and power to cure; it was living-death, and next to the dead, the most defiling of all that was unclean. The leper could not enter a walled town; he must go bareheaded, with rent garments and lower lip covered—mourning his own dead self; and must call as he goes, "Unclean, unclean!" His merely entering a house defiled it to the rafters, and to touch him—nay, to salute him—was defilement. Disease, taught the rabbis, was the direct punishment of sin, and leprosy, the direst of all dis-

eases, was the extremest, the most awful physical curse of God.

Lepers never expected to be cured. There was some hope for everyone except them and the dead; and it was because they were hopeless that none had yet sought for cure of Jesus. But see! a leper has fallen upon his face at the Master's feet. The wretch, "full of leprosy," has heard of this wonderful Healer; he has listened from a distance to his gracious words; he has stood afar off and looked into his face; and, leper though he is, outcast of men, morally dead, in the presence of this Jesus hope stirs within him as naturally as the sap of the maple stirs under April's sun. Even a leper could have no doubt of the infinite power and goodness of this man. A mighty hope awoke within him, a mighty faith mastered him, and kneeling at Jesus' feet he cries beseechingly: "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

"I will," answered Jesus; and reaching forth his hand as he spoke, he touched the leper into instant and perfect wholeness, saying, "Be thou made clean."

Jesus touched him with his hand before he commanded him to be clean, in direct violation of the letter of the Law and the severest social customs against pollution; for he had come to liberate the spirit of religion, by striking off the manacles of rabbinic literalism, by killing the "letter that killeth." The touch of that hand healed and purified, but itself remained unstained, as a cloud-wreath is unstained by the blue of a summer sky. Jesus descended into the mire of the world's sin, touching its lepers, eating with its publicans, talking with its harlots, going among its fallen, forgiving, restoring and saving; diffusing purity, peace and hope; and in it all

remained as free from contamination and stain as the lily whose root is buried in the slimy ooze of the river, but whose blossom floats upon the surface of the tide, pure and fragrant.

His face was radiant with compassion, his voice trembling with emotion as he healed the leper; but the man was no sooner restored than the whole attitude of Jesus changed, and vehemently, rudely, almost angrily, "He thrust him away, charging him severely to tell no man of his cure, but to go direct to the priest and make the offerings for his purity that the Law demanded. Why go to the priest? Because Jesus had come to fulfill the Law, and the requirements of the Law must be met in this case. The priests in Jerusalem had just sent spies to watch Jesus and entrap him in some unlawful act; and Jesus sends this leper back to Jerusalem as a witness to the priests.

The leper began to publish the story of his cure far and wide. It was the tidal wave. Over the entire country it swept, gathering might as it rolled, until Jesus could no longer openly enter into any city. Out in the hills and desert places he was compelled to stay because the clamor over his works was defeating the power of his words. But even here excited multitudes, wild with Messianic hopes, pour out to him.

We are still following the lead of Mark. Neither Matthew nor Luke makes any attempt here at chronological order. Only the great stages of Christ's life follow one another in order, not his individual acts.

"After some days," when the excitement had somewhat abated, Jesus ventured to return to Capernaum. He went directly to Peter's home, but was not left

long in quiet there. The news of his return quickly spread about the town and the dwelling of Peter was again surrounded by eager throngs.

"The great Healer and Teacher, Jesus, is back; let us see what he will do to-day, and hear what new doctrines he will preach," was the word passed from mouth to mouth when they heard Jesus was again in Capernaum.

There was a new element in the crowds now. The scribes had arrived in Capernaum. So far most of these leaders had treated Jesus with careless contempt; but his fame had thoroughly startled them; his popularity threatened their power, their very existence, and from the towns all over Galilee and Judæa they had come to Capernaum to hear him themselves, for it was necessary to take immediate action concerning him. Among these Pharisees and doctors were the agents of the hostile Sanhedrin, who had been sent from Jerusalem to watch and check and use every means to ensnare him.

Peter's house, as it accommodated not only himself and wife but his mother-in-law and Jesus, must have been a house two stories high, one of the better homes of the middle class. According to Edersheim it had a covered gallery or cloister along its sides, facing a courtyard, and this court on one side bordered the street. It was under this gallery in one of the open doorways of the house that Jesus was standing when the paralytic was let down before him.

His audience this day was made up of visitors from every city and town in Palestine. The scribes, most honored of men, occupied seats directly in front of Jesus, while the multitude packed the courtyard and blocked the street as far as they could see and hear.

The spell of his personality, the charm of his words, held his hearers stirless and silent. In the midst of his teaching, four men appeared on the edge of the crowd, with a sick man slung in a hammock from their shoulders. He was a helpless paralytic, whom friends were bringing to Jesus. But they could get no nearer. It was impossible to wedge their way through the dense crowd straining to come closer. From out there they could not even attract the attention of Jesus. What was to be done? They could not lose this present chance. If they wait until the multitude is gone, Jesus himself may be gone. He could heal this hopeless sufferer if they would bring him into his presence, and this they were determined to do. If ordinary means failed, then extraordinary means must be resorted to.

They edged their way around the throng to the rear of the house. Here was a way! An outside stair ran up the back of the house to the roof. Up this they went with their burden, and crossing the brick-paved roof, carefully lifted the hammock over the balustrade and lowered it to the roof of the gallery, just over the place where Jesus was standing. What remained to be done now was but the work of a few minutes. The four men tore up the heavy tiles that were loosely laid upon the rafters, an opening was quickly made, so large that the hammock could pass through, and down they lowered the palsied man at the very feet of the Master.

Jesus stopped. The multitude gazed in silent astonishment. Down into the pallid face and wistful eyes of the sufferer Jesus looked. Not a word was spoken, but such faith and determination surpassed anything he had seen. Pale and anxious, haunting fear upon

his countenance, lay the man gazing up at the Master. Jesus saw the shadow and knew its cause. The man had been taught that his sickness was the result of sin, and that he could not be healed until his sin was forgiven. His fear was that his sin might even now prevent his being cured.

A hush fell upon all. There sat the scribes, their eyes watching every move. This was their opportunity. What would he do? Bending over the prostrate man, with inexpressible tenderness and surety he says, "Be of good cheer, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." His first word was to banish fear and doubt; his next was to free the soul from its paralysis of guilt, preliminary to the cure of the palsied body.

But there were the scribes, and it seems Jesus intended these words for them quite as much as for the paralytic. They had come, not to hinder or disprove his power to heal, but to prove him no better than other sorcerers; to prove him not the Messiah, but an impostor. He read their thoughts, he knew their intentions, and before their very eyes he would establish his Messiahship by doing what God alone could do—forgive sin.

"Blasphemy," muttered they in their hearts.

Answering the unuttered thought, Jesus said, "Is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk? Look! that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I will command this man to rise and go to his own home."

The man arose and went his way, and the scribes, who sought to condemn him, were made the means of bringing to the light the deepest questions concerning his power and authority.

The silence of amazement was broken by a shout from the multitude as the paralytic took up his bed and passed through their midst. And the people, wondering and praising God, departed to their homes saying, "We have never seen it in this fashion before."

CHAPTER X

The Deepening Hostility of the Rabbis

IT was still early summer, about two months after Jesus began his work in Galilee. Following the cure of the paralytic, Peter's courtyard became so inadequate for the gatherings that hung upon Jesus' steps that he chose the best meeting-place Capernaum afforded, and resorted to the wide level beach along the sea. Here on the open shore, away from the noise of the town and outside the cell-like walls of the narrow streets, the young Teacher taught daily.

The meeting-place seems to have been just beyond the harbor of the town, and the road thither led Jesus past the booth of the tax collector. At this time tax collectors in Palestine were appointed directly from Rome and were responsible only to the Roman government. The taxes were no longer farmed through a corporation of Roman middlemen; and more than ever now the collector was regarded as the agent of oppression and the enemy of the people. Roman taxes were a galling burden in every province, but nowhere quite so heavy and so hated as in Palestine. The Jews chafed under Gentile rule; to pay tribute to any but Jehovah, to render unto Cæsar what they felt did not belong to Cæsar, violated the foundation principles of their religion, their instincts, and traditions.

The exactions of the tax collectors were cruel and

tyrannous beyond endurance, especially those of the collectors who had to do with the ships; these were the most extortionate and detested. The taxgatherer, or publican, was justly the most hated and condemned name in Palestine. A Jew who would so far sell his country as to become a publican was rightly regarded as an oppressor, a thief, and a traitor. He was religiously unclean, shunned and loathed by his fellows, and, the scribes taught, was accursed of God almost beyond repentance and salvation.

Capernaum was a border city and the publican at the customhouse levied toll upon all merchandise that passed here between the territories of the two Herods. His duties were not small, for here ran the great caravan road from Damascus, over which passed an immense commerce from the East, westward throughout Palestine and to the ports on the Mediterranean; and besides he collected duties from the boats that landed their fish and the produce from across the sea of Galilee at the harbor in front of him.

It was a certain Levi, or Matthew, who was the official of the customs in Capernaum. As a publican he was especially hated for being one of the class that collected from the ships. Several days now he had seen Jesus pass his booth and had listened to him along the shore; certainly he had heard him in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and himself shunned like a leper by the priests and religious teachers, he felt strongly drawn toward this earnest Jesus of Nazareth. He longed to be spoken to by this Man; he yearned to be looked upon once more with friendly eyes; he began to hate his social ostracism; and especially did he wish to be admitted into the circle of this Man's followers. But Jesus was a Rabbi, and would turn

all the more with loathing from one so detested and lost as a publican! So thought Matthew. He was taught by the rabbis that between him and salvation there was a gulf of repentance impossible to cross. Jesus read the whole story in the official's face. Of all men this publican was just the man for whom the Messiah had come, and, stopping for a moment on his way, Jesus looked down into his heart, where longing for righteousness and hope and peace lay buried under the weight of rabbinic bigotry, prejudice, and pride, and said to him, "Follow me."

The Jew passing, saw Matthew, the publican, the sinner, and in disgust hurried by; Christ passing, saw Matthew, the publican, the sinner, but saw also the *man*, and stopping, called, and the man responded. Joyously Matthew closed his accounts with Cæsar, turned over his position of wealth to another, and joined Jesus, to become henceforth one of the Twelve, and the first man to write down the Saviour's words. From a hated, degraded collector of customs in Capernaum Matthew is called to record the gospel story!

It was incredible: Matthew, the publican, called as a disciple of this new Teacher? Perhaps nothing that Jesus had yet done or said roused so much surprise and anger, nor so much joy as this call of the publican. It was distinctly a new, a startling departure, the most advanced position Jesus had taken. It marked the beginning of what was almost a new religious era. The kingdom of God is thrown open by this act to publicans and sinners; lines of religious caste are obliterated; walls of rabbinic exclusiveness are leveled; pride, prejudice, the shallow piety of ceremonialism, the narrow limits of traditionalism, the

deadness of literalism swept aside; and salvation, full and free, offered, not to the Levitically clean, the seed of Abraham, but to the spiritually receptive, the children of the universal Father.

An event so signal, so meaningful, called for more than a usual acknowledgment; and Matthew made a feast in honor of Jesus, to celebrate the call. All the publicans in the region round about were invited, and with them were included "sinners"—not necessarily the worst classes, but men from the multitudes, who, for a hundred reasons, were proscribed by the rabbis. And Jesus, the Messiah, sat at meat with this company. Nothing had so thoroughly alienated the rabbinists as this call of Matthew; it cut off all hope of a following from them; but Jesus knew that nothing could be expected from them, and now so far traverses the prejudices of even the common people as to eat with sinners. This was revolutionary, and must have appeared even to the chosen disciples as dangerous, if not, indeed, unwise and mistaken. They sat with him at the table, for they would not be separated from him now, even at the risk of ceremonial uncleanness, but certainly they were not happy eating with these outcasts and defiled.

The scribes readily divined the feelings of the disciples and made the most of this opportunity. Of course they were at the feast—not eating at the table nor under the defiled roof of a publican, but near enough to spy out all that was going on. They followed the track of Jesus, and were rewarded to-day with a second breach of the Law as part of the evidence to condemn him. First he had blasphemed; now he eats with sinners and is guilty of ceremonial uncleanness. Cunningly the scribes make their objec-

tion to this fellowship with sinners, not to Jesus himself, but to the disciples, who were already doubtful as to the propriety of eating with the unclean. If the scribes could convince the disciples that their Master had overreached himself, these new followers might be turned away and the cause of Jesus effectually hindered.

But the Master left the disciples no chance for argument; he answered for them and himself with words that silenced the carping critics and let in a flood of new light upon the character of his mission. "They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," he replied, adding, "Go learn what that means which is written in your Scriptures, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.'"

To have learned what the prophet meant by "mercy and not sacrifice" the scribes would have had to unlearn all they knew. It was not the blood of beasts; it was not mercy that reckoned itself meritorious sacrifice, that God cared for; but a love for him that endured and suffered, and called its sufferings not sacrifice, but a privilege and a joy. They had never learned Christ's interpretation of these words, and they failed utterly to understand how love to God and religious zeal could prompt one to mingle thus with sinners. It was the poor, the needy, the sick, the consciously guilty that Jesus came to call to the Kingdom. None are to be forced in; the self-righteous and self-satisfied are not compelled to receive its gifts, which are wholly gratuitous.

Jesus had hardly silenced the scribes when some disciples of the imprisoned Baptist, who were much troubled at seeing Jesus feasting, asked him, "Why do

we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples fast not?"

This is the third breach of the Law. Evidence is fast accumulating against him. To these discouraged and half-enlightened followers of John, Jesus replies in a striking way that now becomes characteristically his own.

Did they not remember that John's last testimony to Jesus was that he was the Bridegroom? Did they not know that rabbinic Law suspended even its strictest ordinance of fasting and made the marriage week one of pure festivity, that all mourning and even prayers were banished from that week? If John had thus pointed to Jesus as the Bridegroom, should they, the disciples of John, expect "the sons of the bride-chamber" to fast, while the Bridegroom was with them? No, but the time will come, he says, when they shall fast. Then with a metaphor that only Jesus could have used, he tells them that his teaching and truth is a garment entirely new, and not the old garment of Judaism, whose rents and holes John was trying to patch with new cloth by new fastings and increased rigor of ceremony; Jesus had brought an entirely new garment, which must be worn in place of the old robe. "My truth," he says, "is new wine, and it cannot be contained in the old bottles."

Some time after Matthew's feast—it must have been in May or June, as the wheat was ripe for harvest—the Master and his disciples went out through the cornfields on a Sabbath. The fields were in the near vicinity of Capernaum, not over two thousand paces away, for the Pharisees followed him, and two thousand paces was the limit of a Sabbath journey—and,

we may be sure, the Pharisees stayed within the bounds of the Law. Doubtless these spies followed to see if Jesus would break this Law, but witnessed instead, a breach ten thousandfold more flagrant and heinous. The disciples were hungry, and pushing their way through the standing wheat plucked the heads, rubbed off the chaff in their hands and ate, in which the conspiring scribes saw a gross infringement of the Law of Sabbath rest.

We can measure the anger of the scribes and how strong a case this gave them against Jesus by remembering that the Sabbath Law was fundamental in Pharisaism. So painfully had they divided it that it had become a grievous burden; and so terribly had they exaggerated its importance that a wanton violation of its slightest prohibition was punishable with death. A large part of the deadly hostility to Jesus sprang out of his attitude toward Sabbath observance. The preservation of this commandment to do no work on the Sabbath had developed into a monomania with the Pharisees. It was the idol of their worship. They hedged it round from all possible violence by innumerable chafing, petty and absurd restrictions, and prohibitions as incongruous to the ends they sought to attain as they were multitudinous and burdensome.

They taught that the Sabbath was as eternal as heaven and was observed in heaven by the angels and even by the Sabbatical River of the Holy City which ceased its flow on that day to rest. Even the tortures of Gehenna were intermitted on the Sabbath; and as it was kept inviolate in heaven and in hell it must be kept on earth; so, taught the Pharisees, Israel, the nation, was called into being for that sole purpose—

the keeping of the Sabbath on earth. It was the proud boast of these strict legalists that they suffered all manner of inconvenience and loss among heathen nations for the Sabbath's sake; and that rather than break the Law they had suffered themselves to be captured and killed and had even allowed Jerusalem to be taken by the enemy. The Sabbath Law had been designed to make the day a rest day in that no work was to be done, and to make it a holy and a happy day for worship and festivity—the day for which the other six were lived—but the intolerable laws of the rabbis had thwarted both ends. They made it a sacred duty to put on the best robe and have a festal meal on the Sabbath, but prohibited as unlawful all cooking, even the building or extinguishing of a fire. There was just one exception to the all-inclusive prohibitions of this Law—when a man's life required labor. A man was to keep the Commandments that he might live, but if in keeping them he lose his life, their end was defeated, hence when life actually was at stake, the Law was superseded, though some of the more legalistic would not concede even this.

We can now understand the import of the scribes' taunting accusation as they pointed to the disciples and said to Jesus, "Behold, why do *they* on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" Not lawful, because the disciples in plucking the heads of wheat, broke the prohibition against reaping on the Sabbath, and in rubbing out the grains from the chaff they broke the prohibition against threshing.

Jesus turns to his disciples' defense, and answers the legalists from their own Law. "Have ye not read"—the irony of it!—"ye professors and teachers of the Law, how David, your saint and pattern, when he fled

from Saul, hungered, entered the Temple, he and his followers, and ate the shewbread, which is lawful only for priests to eat?"

Of course they had read it, and they knew that David was blameless because the higher necessity of life superseded all ceremonial obligations of the Law, and they stood hushed and beaten before the Master who was allowing his disciples to do no more than David had done, who was in no sense violating the Law that required mercy and not sacrifice.

But Jesus continued: "And have ye not read in your Law, how the priests work in the temple and profane the sabbath without guilt? Then, if ministering in the temple is not breaking the Law, neither is the conduct of my disciples, for there is One here who is greater than the temple." Then he added: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the son of man is Lord even of the sabbath."

The scribes were silenced by their own Law, while Christ's followers by the authority of the Lord of the Sabbath were forever freed from the narrow, ceremonial obligations of the dead letter of the Law.

This failure of the scribes to convict Jesus of Sabbath-breaking only strengthened their determination to find him guilty of the crime and have him publicly condemned to death. They found their chance on the following Sabbath. Public favor was still strongly on the side of Jesus and any open violence on the part of the scribes would have been useless and dangerous; but these spies had already lodged their cavils in the minds of many and the leaven was beginning to work. Jesus had blasphemed. He had eaten with publicans; his disciples had broken the custom of fast-

ing; and now, if he could be openly accused of profaning the Sabbath, even the multitude could offer no resistance to his being put to death.

The Sabbath came, and Jesus, as usual, took charge of the services in the synagogue. The scribes were there on the front seats, with their snare set. Either by agreement, or by a well-arranged plan, they had brought a man with a withered hand into the synagogue, and pushed him up toward the front where he could not fail to be seen by Jesus. They knew what Jesus would do. He could not see disease and misery without relieving it. If he healed this man, it would be a violation of the Law, which said only to save a man's life might one work on the Sabbath.

Jesus reads their purpose in their dark faces; he sees the man with the withered hand whom they are pushing into his presence; and he steps into the lists with his enemies. "Stand forth," he commanded; and the afflicted man came out in front of the platform, where every eye was riveted upon him. Then he put their own question to the scribes, but in such a way that they were dumb before it.

"What man of you, so poor that he have only one sheep, if that sheep fall into a pit on the Sabbath will not lay hold on it and lift it out?" And he paused for their answer; but they were speechless. "How much better then is a man than a sheep? Does your Law command to save life, or to kill? to do good, or to do evil?" and they could answer him not a word. For a moment a conflict of feelings raged in the Saviour's breast; anger at their sinister purposes; grief at their hardness of heart, which giving way to compassion for the needy man, he said, "Stretch forth thy hand." Forth came the right hand, untouched by the Saviour,

but strong and new, restored by the power of his word.

Before their eyes the Master had done what they hoped he would do, but not as they hoped he would do it. The most fanatical Pharisee could not possibly construe that healing into a breach of the Law. No one could claim a mere spoken word to be a violation. Baffled, the spies left the synagogue and in their defeat they even took council with their enemies, the Herodians, how they might bring Jesus to death.

The Pharisees and Herodians no longer concealed their intentions toward Jesus, and he, aware of their designs, withdrew from Capernaum to an uninhabited place along the seashore. Perhaps, too, he needed more room for the increasing multitudes than even the shore by the wharf of the city gave him, for now, it appears, that from every quarter of Palestine and from surrounding provinces the people gathered about this new Teacher, whose fame resounded far beyond the borders of his own country. So great were these throngs that Jesus was forced to have a boat wait upon him, from which, after healing the diseased, he might preach to them along the shore.

But the number was increasing beyond his power to control. Caravans of pilgrims, bringing every manner of disease, poured after him from over every highway; and across the Sea of Galilee shiploads of sick came from the lands to the east. The healing was now sorely hindering the teaching, and the Master sought to lessen the numbers who should be brought to him by enjoining silence on all who were cured; but that failed to check the tide.

It was at this time, fearing lest his enemies would

cut him off before the foundations of the Kingdom could be firmly laid in the heart of these fickle crowds, that Jesus called his followers about him and chose from among them Twelve, "that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."

On the evening preceding the choice of the Twelve, Jesus had returned to Capernaum, as was his wont after a day with the people along the shore, but instead of sleeping, he waited until it grew dark, then, unobserved, took his way through the streets of Capernaum out to one of the neighboring hills, where he spent the night alone in prayer, as preparation for the choosing of the Twelve.

He had told them where they should find him, and in the morning his more earnest disciples resorted to the appointed place, and here from the number he called Twelve "whom also he named apostles."

Who were the Twelve? Seven of the number we have already met—Andrew, Simon, John, and James—as far back as the day after the temptations in the wilderness, when they followed Jesus from Bethabara; Philip and Nathanael-Bartholomew a day later; and Levi-Matthew only a few days back. Of the five others—Thomas, Simon the Canaanite, James the son of Alphæus, Thaddæus, and Judas Iscariot—we know nothing. Simon Peter and Andrew were brothers; James and John were brothers; Thaddæus (or Judas Lebbæus) was the brother of James, the son of Alphæus, and of Simon the Canaanite, and these three were cousins of Christ, since their father, Alphæus (or Clopas), was the brother of Joseph; and Andrew and Peter were cousins of Christ, for their mother, Salome, was the sister of Mary. Thus five of the Twelve were from the family of Jesus. In tempera-

ment, disposition, occupation, and thought the Twelve were representative men: fishermen, a zealot, a publican, and a scholar were among them. Eleven were Galileans; Judas Iscariot, the "man of Kerioth," a town in Judah, was the only one of Judæan origin, and he was the betrayer.

The Twelve were chosen that "they might be with him." He wanted to instruct these in the principles of his kingdom, to have them hear all his public teaching, and in private to expound more fully and make clear his meaning. He wrote no books—the only line of his writing spoken of was written with his finger in the sand—but the hearts of these Twelve were to be his pages, and on them he now intends to write. And these Twelve he will send forth, that, when his voice is still, they shall continue to preach—him.

A tradition as far back as the days of the crusaders points to a mountain called "Horns of Hattin," on the road to Nazareth, two or three hours' walk from Capernaum, as the mount upon which Jesus spent this lonely night in prayer, preparatory to his choice of the Twelve, and as the place where he delivered the discourse known to us as the "Sermon on the Mount." The two hornlike heights at each end of the mountain rise about sixty feet above the broad plain or body of the mountain between them, and this plateau, and the heights, easily accessible from the plains below, meet perfectly the requirements of Luke's account of the scene.

Upon one of these heights Jesus passed the long, dark hours of the night alone and in prayer, and when the early dawn of the mid-summer day broke, hither, at his request, came his disciples, out of whom he chose the Twelve. Meantime the new day had fully

come, and the multitudes who had gathered in Capernaum, learning where he had gone, began to stream out to the mountain. It was a heterogeneous crowd, from the cities along the Lake, from Jerusalem and Judæa, and even from distant Tyre and Sidon. The people had learned that, not his word and touch only, but merely to *touch him* meant cure, and so all pressed eagerly up the grassy slopes of the hill to get near him.

As they assembled upon the level place at the foot of the peak, Jesus descended to minister to their many physical needs, and having healed them all, bade them sit while he reascended the height a little way; and here, gathering his disciples at his feet, he seated himself, after the manner of Jewish teachers, and under the open sky, spake to this listening throng as never man spake; and his words have come down to us in the Sermon on the Mount.

CHAPTER XI

The Kingdom of God

MARVELOUS as were his works of healing, the words of teaching that now fell in simple earnestness from his lips were infinitely more marvelous. This sermon is not the sum of Christ's teaching, not the whole of the gospel of Jesus, but whether we view it as an ethical code, as the "full delineation of the ideal man of God," or as the principles and laws of a heavenly kingdom, it is eternally comprehensive.

The Sermon on the Mount is a description of the kingdom of God which the mission of Jesus was to establish upon earth in the hearts of his believers.

The sermon begins with a series of ten Beatitudes; not ten stern and rigorous commandments, delivered, amid darting lightnings and crashing thunders, and wreathing smoke-clouds, by the Unseen Presence, upon a rent and flame-wrapped mountain, as the "fiery Law" of a people that lay prostrate in terror while the awful blast of the trumpet shakes the earth; but ten infinitely rich and precious promises, delivered to a charmed and eager multitude, sitting upon green and flower-studded slopes, under a smiling sky, by a loving human-divine Teacher and King, as the sublime outline sketch and character of his kingdom, open to them all.

This contrast between the delivery of the Law and the Sermon is no more striking than the unlikeness between the Kingdom as Jesus now presents it, and

the contemporary Jewish teaching. The knell of popular Jewish hopes for the Kingdom was sounded with the first Beatitude. There was nothing national in that promise; it was worldwide. And with the Beatitudes was swept away the principle of "good works" underlying the hollow Jewish religion. There was to be no merit system in the Kingdom. The poor in spirit were to receive the Kingdom; they that mourn were to be comforted; not *because* they were poor in spirit, not as a reward for mourning, but because the Kingdom is a gift to all men. And its subjects, who should thus be kept and lighted by the Kingdom, were to preserve and light the whole world for all time.

This closes the introduction of the Sermon, the outline of the Kingdom. But this kingdom was the one promised of old to Israel, and what is its relation to the theocracy of Moses? Not a new kingdom, but the old continued and universalized. Law was eternal; founded on eternal principles of right and wrong, and heaven and earth could be swept away more easily than a fraction of that Law. Jesus came to fulfill the Law by being the first to keep it perfectly; to fulfill it by revealing its infinite truth, and by imparting to all men, through faith in him, power to keep it as he kept it. Thus the "Law came through Moses; but grace and truth by Jesus Christ."

The Law must be kept now in a much more real sense than the scribes and Pharisees keep it, for, said he, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." And with this transition there follows to the end of the chapter a detailed criticism and interpretation of the Law.

This is Christ's literal interpretation of the Law as it differs from the bare, narrow literature of the scribes. Stripping them of everything external, he reveals the real spirit of the Commandments. Murder, adultery and perjury are traced home to the heart, and the spirit that prompts them is condemned as the real breach of the Law. The law of retaliation and revenge was to give place to a spiritual law of pity, patience, and forbearance that should rule the heart; while the law of love was made absolutely universal, for all men were the children of one Father, whose love was as wide as his world. In short the children of the Kingdom were to be, in all points touching the spirit of the Law, perfect as their Father was perfect.

In the next chapter, the "criticism is carried deeper," and the question is not what constitutes merely keeping the Law, but what constitutes *real* "piety, spirituality, and sanctity." To illustrate the true spirit of the Kingdom, Jesus shows the motives that underlie real almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. The externalism of the Pharisees in these three leading features of their religion is shown, and this contrasted with the modesty and secrecy which ought to attend these acts. But, more than this, even modesty and secrecy are not enough; a deep underlying motive must prompt to these actions, and that motive must not be the thought of merit and the Pharisaic desire for earthly reward, but the motive of pure love to God, by which almsgiving, prayer, and fasting are the natural results of an absolute surrender, a complete self-dedication to the Father. This is the true righteousness of the Kingdom; to seek this must be the sole care of men henceforth, for with righteousness will come all other needed things.

In this next chapter we have a picture of the Kingdom in its external aspects. First, the Kingdom is universal. Men might seek to circumscribe it, by casting out all who did not conform to their ways and beliefs, but it was not for men to say who should or should not enter; secondly, the Kingdom could not be "extended by external means," by the sword and outward force, but must grow in response to men's desires as the gift of God; thirdly, men could not be forced into the Kingdom; not even God could make men members against their wills; they must enter by personal effort and self-denial. And, finally, it was not by words or forms of those who preached the truths and professed to live by the spirit of the Kingdom that we should know them as real members, but by the vital fruits of their lives. And then, concluding his great Sermon, he said that whoso enters into this kingdom is like a wise man who builds his house upon such a solid foundation that neither rain, nor flood, nor wind can undermine or blow it down.

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

After the Sermon Jesus with his new apostles returned to Capernaum, followed by a large part of the multitude, who rarely let him escape from their sight during these days. The hostility of the scribes had not yet affected even the Jewish elders of Capernaum, as we see from the event which followed directly upon the return to the town; and the common people attended him with increasing numbers and still heard him gladly.

He was now besieged. After a day of incessant activity and a long night of prayer, followed by a morning of healing and teaching, Jesus was worn and exhausted, but so persistent and pressing were the multitudes that neither he nor his disciples found time for sleep. So unremitting were his labors, so consuming his zeal, so exalted his spirit, that his friends had begun to fear for his health; and now, when they learned the whole truth about the activity of these last hours, they thought his zeal had at last overbalanced his reason. They thought him beside himself and came out to him in the streets to take him by force from the people and his toil.

These "friends" were not the same as his "brethren and mother" mentioned a little later by Mark, as coming to take Jesus away; for the solicitude of these latter was from a different cause, as we shall see hereafter; but both incidents show us the same picture of Jesus' extreme activity, his burning fervor and deep love, so inexplicable to all, especially to those who had lived for thirty quiet years with him in humble, obscure Nazareth.

As he was entering Capernaum this day a deputation of Jewish elders met him in behalf of a centurion whose servant had been seized with paralysis.

These elders were the rulers of the synagogue, the chief men and magistrates of Capernaum, and that they should come on a mission of entreaty for a Roman centurion, of all men the one they would naturally most hate, almost shocks our belief in the truth of the narrative until we hear their needed explanation. Though he is the commander of the Roman garrison in their town, this centurion is in sympathy with the Jews, and has even so far learned

to reverence the God of Israel as to build with magnificent liberality a synagogue for Capernaum.

This deep concern for a mere slave, at a time when slaves were treated no better than beasts, shows us the centurion as a man of feeling and morality. Jesus at once started for his home, but before reaching there the centurion sent out other friends to intercept him, begging him not to trouble to come, for it was not fit that he should enter so unworthy a roof, but to merely speak the word and his servant would be healed; for as an officer he knew his own commands would be instantly obeyed, and he believed even in the authority of the word of Jesus to heal.

His was a Gentile home and unclean, and so unfit for so great a Jew as Jesus; and he was a Gentile, and so unworthy so great an honor as a visit from Jesus. Such were the humble feelings of the centurion. But what were these than the very spirit of the Beatitudes? Here indeed was one who met the conditions of entrance, to whom the kingdom of God must be thrown open; and marveling at the simple faith, the real humility of the blunt soldier, and that this first to claim the Kingdom should have been a Roman soldier rather than a Jewish rabbi, Jesus speaks the word of power and the centurion's prayer is answered.

At the side of the Master there stood that deputation of Jewish elders and a number of followers who, now, had not only heard the Sermon on the Mount, but had seen its application. It was an opportunity for Jesus. Turning to them, and reverting to one of their own favorite passages, Jesus pointed a lesson from this Roman's faith that stung and startled them, for it was in absolute contrariety to their Jewish claims and beliefs. "Many shall come from the east

and west [Gentiles],” he said, “and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom [the Jews] shall be cast forth into outer darkness.”

They were expecting an outward kingdom for Jews only; Jesus brought an inward kingdom for Jews and Gentiles, whose entrance was by faith.

About twenty-five miles southwest of Capernaum on the western slopes of Little Hermon can be seen to-day a few squalid huts of mud and stone upon the ruins of what once was a city of considerable size, with walls and gates. This groveling hamlet is all that remains of the ancient city of Nain—“the pleasant.” In the time of our story Nain was entitled to its fair name. The wide prospect of mountain and plain was a repetition, with varying features, of that glorious Galilean landscape which rolled away from the ridge behind Nazareth. From the heights of Nain, Nazareth lay a few miles to the west; the beautiful leafy slopes of Tabor to the north; Endor might be seen to the right; while the Plain of Jezreel ran wide on the south.

It was the day after healing the centurion’s servant that Jesus, with a great following, started in the early morning for Nain, to begin his second circuit of preaching among the Galilean synagogues.

The long summer twilight was falling as the multitude climbed the rocky road before the gate of Nain. They had nearly reached the wall when the wailing of women was borne to them on the still air, and forth from the gate issued a funeral procession. Leading the sad company came the funeral orator telling the good deeds of the dead; and behind him the

mourning women, chanting in wild strains their song of sorrow, timed to the tinkle of cymbals and the notes of the flute. The body in an open wickerwork coffin followed the women, and was carried by relays of friends, who walked with bare feet. Behind the bier came the relatives, and the reverent multitude that had risen up one by one as the procession passed them, or turned as it met them and followed it to the cemetery.

Above the lamentations of the regular mourners was heard a shrill cry of more than usual bitterness and woe. It was needless to tell Jesus that such a wail could come only from a mother's heart. But there was still a deeper anguish in that cry of a Jewish mother, a Jewish widow and her dead, an only son.

The two processions had come nearer and Jesus saw the mother before the bier, her outer garment rent in grief, weeping, as she followed to the grave him who had been the light of her life. Hastening a step forward in response to the irresistible appeal of want and woe, he said to the mother, with infinite compassion, "Weep not," and putting forth his hand he touched the open coffin, as he had touched the leper, and the bearers stood still. The wailing ceased. A hush of dread and awe fell upon the multitude, and in that silence, spake the Master, "Young man, arise!"

The young man sat up; he spoke; and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

It is little wonder that fear took hold on all; that they glorified God, exclaiming: "A great prophet is arisen among us; and God hath visited his people;" and that the report of this greatest deed went hurrying over all Judæa and the region round about, until

it reached even the ears of John the Baptist, imprisoned behind the gloomy walls of Machærus!

The domains of Herod Antipas included the province of Galilee, west of the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, and the province of Peræa, east of the Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee. Peræa was a narrow strip of territory extending from Pella on its northern boundary to the citadel town of Machærus, guarding the southern boundary on the edge of Arabia.

In the keep of this heavy walled fortress, Machærus, John had been imprisoned since early spring. He had incurred the deep hate of Herodias, the adulterous wife of Antipas, and that degenerate tetrarch, incited by her and played upon by the plotting Pharisees, had thrown John into the dungeon, in order to still the fearless, accusing tongue of the Baptist, and to keep him where there could be no possibility of his raising a revolution among the people. Here he had lain, waiting these many months, sustained by the great hope that Jesus, whom he believed to be the promised Messiah, would somehow, by his almighty power, now restore the kingdom of David, and sit upon David's throne the Ruler and Arbiter of all nations.

But the long, dark days dragged on; reports of wonderful words and wonderful works came to the eager ears in the gloomy cell; yet no sign of the restoration of Israel for which his intense spirit so deeply yearned; and as he waited he grew weary and weak. His faithful followers came and went between Capernaum and Machærus, bearing news of all Jesus did and said, but with the dejection of hope deferred, chafed by his chains, weakened by inactivity and the loss of light and air, and preyed upon by solitude and

dungeon dark and damp, John began to despair, his vision clouded, and doubt commenced to gnaw into his brave believing breast. Had he made a mistake? Would the Christ do the things this Jesus was doing? Could such reports be ever made of the real Messiah? Could the Son of God, for whom he had so long waited, upon whom the spirit of God had descended, and the voice of Heaven pronounced benediction, spend his time in these evil days eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, while the world cried in woe and want and his own prophet lay dying in a dungeon?

It was natural; it was no less than we should expect even in John the Baptist. Moses had faltered; Elijah had wrapped his face in his mantle and retreated in fear to a cave; now John, greater than Moses and Elijah, tried by a hotter fire, and reduced to this weakness, is only less than superhuman. To him, in the midnight of the prison, in the black shadow of horrible, hovering death, his whole life seemed worse than a failure. His years of self-denial, of burning zeal, of fierce, convicting, converting preaching, had brought him only a dungeon as reward; a dungeon and death at the hand of a woman, another Jezebel; his power, so lately shaking all Palestine, was fettered with cankering chains; his innumerable followers, even before his captivity, had fallen to a pitiable few; and oh, the bitter, bitter truth!—Him whom he had proclaimed at hand, had come, had passed, and had left him, the Baptist, alone, comfortless, languishing in prison, even seemed to have forgotten his own infinite mission to men; and, finally and most terrible of thoughts, it might be that it was all an awful error, a vision of his overwrought, overexpectant soul;

that he had led men astray; had hoped in a delusion; that Jesus was not the Messiah!

"Was this He who should come, or should they look for another?" was the question in John's mind, and the message he sent by two of his followers to Jesus. Plainly this was doubt in Jesus; but who shall say whether it was more of doubt than of belief? Doubt prompted this question; but only faith could have led to this straightforward solution. Doubt came, and his cell would have become his grave had that doubt kept him away from Jesus; but, instead, it led him to Jesus, and his night of dread and despair broke into the full dawn of faith and hope and knowledge.

The two messengers found Jesus in the midst of his self-forgetful, saving toil, and without pausing a moment, he told them to return and tell John what they now saw and heard, which, indeed, was the very fulfillment of a prophecy of John's teacher, Isaiah. This would settle his doubt, and he added as they moved away, say to John, not in reproof but as a promise: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

They departed, and Jesus faced the multitude about him and pronounced that eulogy upon John, the most beautiful and lofty, grandest, noblest ever said of men.

Greatest is John of all born of women, says Jesus, but how strangely to his listeners, as to us, does it sound—"But he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he"! Not greater-hearted, greater-souled than John, but greater in knowledge of truth.

Just where and when the foregoing and the following events occurred, except that they both took place during the second missionary journey of Jesus, we

do not know. It was, perhaps, shortly after leaving Nain that Jesus was invited, as was usual, by one Simon, the leading Pharisee of the place, to dine with him.

Simon had no laudable motive for this invitation; curiosity or pride prompted it; and he received Jesus with cold, condescending courtesy; and did his best to make Jesus feel that in accepting this hospitality, it was the guest, not the host, who was honored. Jesus slipped off his sandals, as the custom was, at the door, but Simon gave him no water to bathe his feet; neither did he give him any kiss of welcome; nor yet, as he would have done to any other Jewish rabbi, did he anoint his head with oil; he simply, scarce graciously, made a place for him at his table.

The meal was in progress; all were reclining on the couches, their left arms resting on the table, their feet pointing away from the table toward the walls of the great room, when suddenly a woman entered the open door and stood behind Jesus. For any woman to have thus come into the presence of men would have been highly improper, and sure to have been met with censure; but for this woman!—a scowl of disgust and loathing clouded the face of the Pharisee.

She was a sinner whose impure life made her notorious in the town. But she had heard Jesus speak that morning; she had looked into his face, and a change was wrought within her. The stain upon her soul burned; her life was hateful; for a hope awoke in her heart—a new life, pure and beautiful, had been held out to her by this Teacher, the Christ. She had believed, but yearned to see and hear him again and to tell him her sorrow and love and

gratitude; and she followed him to the house of the Pharisee.

Every eye was turned in hate upon her, save the Master's, as bending to hide her shame, tears filled her eyes, and fell upon the Saviour's feet. Her unbound hair too had fallen in a veil about her face, and seeing her tears upon his feet she bent lower, forgetful of all but shame and love, and wiped the tears away with her hair and covered his feet with kisses. But not yet had her penitence gone deep enough, had she shown all her love; and drawing a vial of sweet perfume from her bosom she poured the precious oil over his feet and bathed them in its fragrance.

Simon saw it all; his ill-concealed contempt, his open disrespect for Jesus deepened into something of the disgust he felt for the woman. "*He a Prophet?*" thought Simon, "a Prophet would have known what kind of a creature this woman is." Jesus read the unspoken sneer, the contempt, the thought upon the self-righteous Pharisee's face. "Simon," said he, "I have somewhat to say unto thee."

"Master" (with mock reverence), "say on."

"A creditor had two debtors; one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty; neither had wherewith to pay, and he forgave them both. Which of them, tell me, would love him most?"

"I suppose," indifferently answered the Pharisee, "he to whom he forgave most."

"Thou hast judged rightly, Simon," then turning for the first time to the woman, he continued: "Seest this woman? I entered thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Thou gavest me no kiss; she hath not ceased to kiss my feet since I came in. My head thou didst not anoint with oil; she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore her sins, which were many, are forgiven; but he to whom there is little forgiveness loveth little." And to the woman with infinite tenderness and delicacy he says what already she knows: that her sins have been forgiven, and to eternal peace and joy dismisses her with his blessing, saving, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

And they around the table in wonder began to say within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

CHAPTER XII

The Parables of Jesus

AFTER the dinner with Simon, the Pharisee, Jesus continued upon this second circuit of preaching among the Galilean towns, attended now, not only by the Twelve and a great throng of grateful, believing and wonder-seeking men, but also, for a while at least, by not a few loving, loyal women.

The names of three of these women are recorded; and something of tenderest reverence and beauty pervades the thought of them—the earliest of that unnumbered host who have lovingly, faithfully followed Jesus and “ministered unto him of their substance.” Mary Magdalena (so called because she lived in Magdala, a village near Tiberias on the shore of the Sea of Galilee) was one of these; and her we shall see again, watching beneath the dark shadow of a cross, and coming early with ointment to an empty tomb. She too, like the woman that was a sinner, loved much, for she had been forgiven and healed of much. Tradition makes her beautiful and rich and profligate before her conversion; but the Scriptures show her beautiful only in devotion, rich only in love, and profligate only in her sacrifices for her Saviour.

Joanna, another named, also had cause for much love; for she was the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, whose son Jesus had healed by his spoken word from Cana. The third named was Susanna. How long these women followed with Jesus we do not know, but probably for a short time only.

Having completed the circuit, Jesus was once more

approaching Capernaum, when two blind men came after him beseeching to be healed. Upon the strength of their faith he restored their sight, charging them (for he now increasingly feared the Pharisees) that they tell no man of it. But they, instead of obeying in thankfulness, let their gratitude unwittingly harm their Benefactor by spreading the news far and wide.

However, little could now be added to the fame of Jesus. The raising of the widow's son at Nain had been heard everywhere, and whatever opposition had been forming against him this miracle precipitated.

On entering Capernaum that day people came bringing to Jesus a dumb man who, besides, was possessed by a demon. This one also Jesus restored, and while the multitudes marveled, the Pharisees saw and cursed.

These enemies, the Pharisees, seem not to have followed Jesus on the journey just ended, but on hearing of the miracle wrought at Nain, had hurried back from Jerusalem bent upon breaking his power at all costs. Their hostility was now more open than ever, and as a party they had become leagued against him.

The healing of this demonized dumb man was the occasion for the commencement of their most telling charge, that Jesus was possessed by devils and did these miracles through the help of Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

That Jesus wrought miracles, these leaders could not deny; but what they now sought to do was to find some explanation for his power that would make his greatest works his greatest condemnation. Miracles, according to the Jews, could be performed in the name of Satan as well as in the name of God. In

whose name did Jesus work them? Denying and hating this humble Galilean, who fulfilled not one of their perverted notions of the Messiah, yet who claimed to be that Messiah, these Pharisees were only too ready to charge Jesus with working in the name of Satan. Thus, to them, Jesus became, not the Revelation of God, but the Incarnation of the devil.

This was subtle poison and far more potent at this time than the fiercest outward opposition could have been. When the great and revered rabbis of Jerusalem, the nation's teachers, frankly acknowledged the miracles of Jesus, but showed how, through the ruler of the demons, he wrought them, it could not be expected that the simple, ingenuous Galilean farmer and fisher folk would be proof against the cunning and authoritative charge. The very awe with which they regarded him; his infinite removal from them; his power and claims only heightened the effect of whatever view they took of him. Naturally, they looked through the glasses of their religious leaders and seeing Jesus now under demoniacal influence, each new miracle, instead of being a manifestation of the Christ, became a fresh evidence of his Satanic agency and deepened the hate and opposition against him, which now clearly and without wavering pointed toward the cross. And from now on the attitude of Jesus toward his enemies changed; all hope of winning them or opposing them was laid aside and all that was left for him to do was to denounce them.

The knowledge of this last charge of the Pharisees quickly reached the ears of the mother and brothers of Jesus, who, little as they understood him, yet loved him, and it filled them with a new fear for his safety,

and, it may be—so great was the power of rabbinical authority, so holden their eyes—even started a doubt as to the doings of this unaccountable Son and Brother. Was he indeed possessed or beside himself? Was it not time for them to exercise their right of kinship and save him from his threatening enemies and from his own possible hallucinations?

And now as reports of new miracles and fresh denunciations of the Pharisees, and new claims of his Messiahship came to them, his mother and brethren hurried forth to him. They found, as always at this time, a vast throng surrounding him while he spoke. To penetrate to him was impossible, but to pass the word along through the crowd that his mother and brothers were out on the edge desiring him, could be done; and this they did.

Had Mary forgotten the words of her Son in the Temple years ago? Had she forgotten his reply at the marriage supper in Cana scarcely a year gone? Had the meaning of the angel's message, the manner of his birth, his life and works and words not yet reached her heart with the full truth? The sword must now, and yet again, pierce her mother's heart ere Jesus would stand apart as her Messiah and Saviour. Jesus could not be harsh or disrespectful to his mother—no Jewish son could; much less he—and we look at once for the real significance of his answer. It was to the relationship with the Father and with these new believers, who through him had found sonship with the Father, and brotherhood with him, that Jesus would point the multitude. He paused for a moment on hearing the request of his mother and brothers and asked, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" Then, stretching forth his hands over

the congregation, he exclaimed: "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother."

Jesus dismissed the multitudes and with his disciples resorted, as he had so often done, to the seashore. He wished for solitude. Fresh dangers threatened him; the time had come when a new course of action must be adopted if he would accomplish his mission, and he longed to be alone. But the people followed him and vast numbers were quickly crowding about him on the shore. His disciples brought up a boat, and once more, from this floating pulpit, the Teacher addressed the audience on the beach; but now, as never before—for now his words were strange and mystical—he spake to them *in parables*.

This parabolic teaching marks a distinctively new and advanced stage in Jesus' work of founding the Kingdom. Its immediate cause was the new and subtle charge of the Pharisees that he was under Satanic influence. This charge now became a theory with his enemies by which they accounted for all he did; and this change in his teaching was his readjustment to the difficult and perilous relations in which this attack placed him. Besides, for a long time Jesus had known that the great mass of people were attracted to him by wonder and curiosity, not by any spiritual discernment of his real personality and mission; that soon they would desert him, and as he yet had many things to say to those who could receive them, he now saw the time had come when he must begin to say these things. Hitherto he had taught the initial truths of the Kingdom, openly and simply, to

all. A few of the people were receptive; most were not. Hereafter he will teach the deeper truths of the Kingdom in parables, that all who thus far have hardened their hearts and withstood him may the less understand and be the further separated; while those who have already received him and the truth shall be drawn the closer to him and shall know more of the Kingdom. By this method Jesus continued to impart truth and instruction concerning the Kingdom; but this was a method also by which he brought every hearer to an out-and-out decision for or against the Kingdom. If one had a leaning toward the new teaching, he must now wholly accept it, and to him, being one that already had a little, more would be given, till he had abundance; but being compelled to choose, if he had little desire for the truth, he would wholly reject it, and from him, having not, would be taken away even the little he might once have had.

Thus the occasion of the parables was the spiritual unreceptiveness of the mass of people; and the effect of the parables was to separate the people, from this time on, into two distinct classes: those who received and those who rejected Jesus. But this effect was due not to the parable itself but to the previous preparation of those who listened: bringing increased light and salvation to all who believed his words and works to be those of the Christ, the Son of God; bringing increased darkness and stumbling to all who, hating truth and righteousness, called him the agent of the devil.

As a form of illustration the parable was very common among Jewish teachers, but Jesus so spiritualized and perfected it, that parabolic teaching may rightly be called the creation of Jesus—a way he had of teach-

ing spiritual truth. It consisted in taking some incident of life or nature, or some imaginary narrative whose truth and commonness was instantly recognized, and making this the foundation of moral and spiritual teaching, by showing the complete analogy or perfect parallel existing between these everyday scenes and incidents and things spiritual. This material world being the work of God, things upon earth have their counterparts in heaven; and Jesus thus made the simplest and commonest incidents and scenes of everyday life the illustrations of loftiest truths or the vehicles of sublimest spiritual lessons. But a parable was more than an illustration, for oftentimes what it suggested was infinitely more than all it illustrated; and some parables were all suggestion and must needs be explained even to those who sought their truth. And, still further, a parable became a test of ability to see, leaving those who loved darkness in still denser darkness, and bringing clearer light to those loving light.

But let us return to the seashore and take our place, not with the multitude on the beach, but with the Twelve in the boat. It was a soft autumn day; a cool breeze blew down the sea and the boat rocked gently on the waves of the limpid lake. Beyond the crowd upon the shore, in the distance, was a sower, going back and forth across his field in the fertile plain of Gennesaret, scattering the seed of his fall planting.

Pointing silently to the sower, till everyone in the throng was gazing in expectant curiosity upon him, Jesus began to speak with strange significance, but with strangely hidden meaning: "The sower went forth to sow." The parable of the sower! The first

such discourse they had ever heard from Jesus! What did it mean?

We have always known the Master's explanation, and to us the meaning is as clear as morning light. But to those who listened that day, except to those who saw in Jesus the Divine Sower and who saw in his words the good seed, it was all a mystery. These crowds flocked about Jesus to hear what he had to say about the kingdom of God so long promised; and while a few believed him the promised Messiah about to establish this kingdom, both unbelieving crowds and believing followers were alike mistaken in the nature of the Kingdom and the way it should come, so that while the multitudes found this parable a total mystery, the disciples, even, had to ask its complete meaning. All were still looking for a material kingdom, a Messiah who would be an earthly King, and establish his power by force. But no. He had indeed brought the Kingdom—a kingdom, not to be *about* them but *within* them. Their hearts were its soil; he the sower; his gospel the seed. But as with the sower's seed yonder, so with his seed of the gospel; some would fall by the roadside and birds would pick it up; some would fall on shallow, stony ground, to spring up and wither; some would fall among thorns and perish; some would drop into good soil and bring forth fruit.

It was perhaps while the multitudes were discussing the meaning of these mysterious words that the disciples in the boat asked and received of Jesus his explanation of the parable. How altogether different this idea from their Jewish notions! Not outward, of sudden and splendid conquest, but inward, of slow growth; not by might, but by spirit!

Again he addressed the people. He had just told them how the Kingdom *came*, or how it was *planted*; now he advances a step in the development of the Kingdom, and with the parable of the growing seed (Mark 4. 26) tells them how the Kingdom *grows*. It grows as a seed grows. The farmer sows it, and that is all he can do; but while he attends to his ordinary duties, the earth, with life-giving power within herself, brings the seed from leaf to ripened fruit. The farmer sees the growth, even reaps the grain, but cannot tell *how* it grew. So he, the Sower, will drop the seed and leave it to the quickening, developing power inherent in the seed and in the soil and in the showers until the harvest is ripe. Darker and darker grew the "mystery of the Kingdom" to those "without"; clearer and clearer it grew to those who, in sympathy and belief, were already within the Kingdom.

But still the mystery was to be made more mysterious or made wholly plain. In that country then and to this day it is no uncommon thing for an enemy to come in the night, and upon a man's field of newly planted wheat, to sow tares. These tares, according to Jewish legend, were a degenerate poisonous kind of wheat, undistinguishable from good wheat until it came to seed. The Kingdom is like a field of wheat oversown with tares. All understood the picture, but not even the disciples saw its application to the conditions in the Kingdom. It was necessary for the disciples to learn this lesson now, for already in the Kingdom, among their own numbers, were tares—the sowing of Satan, that must grow together until the harvest, when, without harm, the separation can be made.

Three more un-Jewish pictures of the Kingdom could not have been drawn to illustrate the mystery of the Kingdom. But Jesus had not ended his teaching. Two more perfect pictures of the Kingdom he now drew for them, neither of which they could then understand for they could not conceive of the Kingdom in any such lights. First, with the parable of the mustard-seed, Jesus told how the Kingdom, from the smallest, most insignificant beginnings, would grow *outward* and extend itself until it became greater than all other realms of spiritual truth; and how the nations would rest in it as birds settled among the wide-spreading branches of the mustard plant, which grew to be the greatest garden herb from the smallest garden seed. Then with that other homely parable of meal and leaven he illustrated how the Kingdom, being hidden in a man's or a nation's heart, grew *inward*, pervading and transforming the whole life.

The multitudes were dismissed and Jesus with his disciples returned to his house in Capernaum. The people went their way confused and questioning; the disciples came back with the outlines of a new Kingdom looming large in the dawning light of a new and spiritual conception. These followers were beginning at last to catch at something of the real meaning of their Teacher's words. The parables had been stimulating and suggestive beyond anything they had so far heard, and for the first time the disciples really awakened to question Jesus deeply. When alone in the house Jesus answered their questions, but in such a way as to suggest other and deeper thoughts.

The day was nearly done, yet Jesus had some further private words for his followers. All they had

heard to-day was about the Kingdom. But the Kingdom was not something to be taught only—it was a reality, a gift, to be valued and possessed; and with two more parables—the treasure hid in the field, and the pearl of great price—the Master showed them how great and how priceless a treasure it was, and what they must give up to have it.

One lesson more and the day was done. Most of that little company in the room were fishermen and must remember, that, as the draw-net will bring many worthless fish to shore, so within the church there will be many unfit for the Kingdom and not to be included in its spiritual fellowship.

The twilight lay in long shadows upon the shore and over the sleeping lake. Jesus went out in the clear, cool evening to rest by the seaside, but his very appearance in the streets was heralded and he was quickly pursued by an eager concourse. He had been with the people throughout the day; they still had his words to think upon. Turning to the disciples he said, "Let us depart to the other side of the sea." The disciples, in their eagerness to escape, hurried into the boat without forethought or provision and pushed off.

But while this was being done a Jewish scribe, dazzled by the marvelous teaching of Jesus, and feeling that Jesus would surely need and accept one so learned and authoritative as himself, exclaimed, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

But Jesus, seeing into the man, that he was like the stony soil, whereon the seed had sprouted quickly, but would quickly wither, replied: "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

That discouraging fact was enough for the scribe;

he was neither received nor rejected—simply tested. We never hear of him again.

Then an earnest listener, who now would become a regular follower, seeing the hasty departure said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father."

"Follow me," was the startling and unconditional command of Jesus, "and let the dead bury their dead"—by which he meant, Let those who are dead to my truth attend to those worldly cares.

Accompanied by a few other boats they were far out from shore heading toward the barren bluffs of the eastern side, when, with not a moment's warning, the skies blackened, a screaming wild wind tore loose from the northern mountain gorges and swept raging over the cowering sea. The trembling waters leaped under the lash of the tempest. Foaming and furious, wind and wave grappled and fought in fearful frenzy, beating the boats in their maddened might as though they were empty shells. The boats were unmanageable. Most of the disciples were experienced fishermen and used to the sea, but in these sudden storms the winds were masters. Terror seized every one. Again and again they were buried in foam and spray; wave after wave poured over them, and their boats began to fill. All this time, while the boats were flecked with foam, rocked by the storm, and covered with darkness, Jesus slept. Weary with the long labors of the day, the Son of man slept the deep sleep of physical fatigue. The tumult of the tempest did not disturb him, until a cry of terror and dismay is mingled with the roar of the storm, "Master! Master! save! we perish!" awoke him. He wakened into the night of storm and alarm and terror, but his spirit

knew no change. Rousing at the cry for help, he answered through the din and confusion: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then rising and turning his face to the howling winds, he stretched his hands out against them and the darkness and the angry waters, saying, "Peace! Be still!"—and all was calm. Softly, the boat lay, rocking on the sobbing sea; the stars came out, the silence in the night was broken by creaking oars, and over the hushed and starry waters moved the boats toward the dim, dark hills along the coast of the Gergesenes. And as they rowed, the men whispered in wonderment and fear and awe to one another, "Who is this?" "The Son of God."

Where the wady Semak makes into the Sea of Galilee through the bare hills may be seen to-day the ruins of ancient Gerasa. Behind the ruins towers a high mountain, whose steep slopes drop rapidly to the sea with just a narrow shelf of beach where a boat might land. In the sides of this mountain are gloomy caverns, used in that olden time for tombs. Across the sea from Gerasa, on the western shore, lies the plain of Genesaret, with Capernaum a little to the north.

Toward Gerasa and the dark shadowy mountain the fishing boats with Jesus and the disciples came gliding, while the softened splendor of the stars made the night wide and luminous. The keels crunched into the sand; the Master stepped upon the shore, when down along the mountain and over the beach, moved two strange shadows, rapidly approaching the boats. They had issued from the blackness of one of the foul gruesome tombs, and now in the soft starlight they were seen to be men in all the horror of raving hu-

manity. One of them, the foremost, was naked and wild and mad. His long hair hung matted over his glowing eyes, his flesh was bruised and bleeding, and frothing at the mouth in his frenzy, he rushed upon the company yelling frightfully.

He would rend them in his fury, but suddenly stopping and facing Jesus, he fell before him as if to worship, crying in an agony of pain and fright as the demons in him struggled for possession, "I adjure thee, by God, that thou torment me not."

"What is thy name?" asked Jesus calmly, as though he would quiet the ravings of the madman by waking memories of the long-past.

"Legion," screamed the maniac, now fully lost to reason, and speaking with the tongue of the six thousand devils his diseased mind and perturbed imagination felt within him, "My name is Legion, for we are many." And with that the devils fell to beseeching Jesus not to send them into the deep abyss of the sea.

Up on the mountainside was a herd of swine, their dim forms just showing in the half light, standing stock still, as swine stand when suddenly aroused, listening to these piercing cries.

"If thou cast us out," said the still raving demons, "send us not out of the country, but suffer us to go into the swine."

"Go," answered Jesus.

There was instantly a wild panic in the herd, a mad rush down the steep, a frightful plunge into the dark waters of the sea—and all was still. But the panic had seized the herdsmen too, and they fled, telling their wild tale everywhere and by early morning a multitude of Gergasenes had gathered on the shore. When they saw for themselves this horrible maniac, who had

so long defied chains and roamed the terror of the neighborhood, sitting at Jesus' feet wearing a coat some one had cast about him, and restored to his right mind, they marveled and feared, and remembering their lost swine began to beg the Master to depart from their coast.

Sadly, for he could do nothing against this wish of the people, Jesus turned back to the boats. He had come for rest and found none; but as he had brought peace and light to one their voyage had not been in vain. The restored man was begging to be taken as a disciple, but Jesus had another work for him, and he answered the request, "Return to thine *own house*."

When Jesus and his disciples touched the beach at Capernaum, the morning of his return from the country of the Gergasenes, an eager company was waiting to receive him. He was welcomed even by the unbelieving crowd, for, while the mass did not understand his parables, still Jesus was a mighty Wonder-worker and the people did not wish him to depart from them.

It had been a night of storm on the lake, and it had been a night of anxiety in a home on the land. Jairus, the chief ruler of the Capernaum synagogue, had watched the long night through at the bedside of his daughter. She was his only child, just turned twelve. She was dying. Was it some acute disease that had fallen suddenly as a frost falls from a clear sky? And had the stricken father not been able to call Jesus before? No. Judging from this narrative, the girl had been sick for some time, and it was only in this extremest need, as a last resort that Jairus came—driven, as it were, to Jesus.

He had known how the court official's son was cured; perhaps he had been one of the elders who asked Jesus to attend the centurion's servant; he had seen him perform many miracles; and it was this chief ruler who had invited Jesus again and again to speak in the synagogue; but for all this, he had been slow to believe in Jesus; and it was only in this last dire extremity, all else failing, that his hope goaded into assurance and trust.

He broke through the throng about Jesus and in his agitation and despair, even fell on his face, and clinging to the Master's feet, begged him to come to his home, for his daughter was dying, might that moment be dead. Jesus was so touched by this agony of the proud ruler, now broken and humbled, that he turned immediately toward the afflicted home. The ruler's words, and the mission on which Jesus now went were bruited abroad until the whole multitude were pressing up, following at the back of Jesus, actually crowding and jostling him as they pushed along, curious and expectant.

But there was one in that eager multitude, brought thither by more than curiosity—a woman, who for twelve years had suffered sorely from a disease she dared not name because it made her unclean. She had spent all she had in fruitless efforts to be cured, and at last in despair, like Jairus, she had come to the Great Physician. But how different the faith with which she came than that of the chief ruler! Jairus had delayed for lack of faith; she for shame or timidity or ignorance or poverty; and now, in spite of these, comes, and in boundless faith will be content even to touch the hem of his garment, and so filch the blessing that she dare not ask.

Jesus had probably a turban upon his head made of a kerchief; sandals upon his feet; a long close-fitting, seamless robe—the “coat” of the disciples—hanging from his shoulders to his ankles, called the *chalug*, over which was another robe, sleeved, close-fitting, reaching to the ankles, girded about the middle with a belt. Over this, upon his shoulders, was a cloak, worn by every Jew, made of a square piece of cloth, bordered on the edges, and with white fringes at the four corners, tied into tassels with ribbon of hyacinth blue, symbolizing holiness to the Lord.

Likely it was one of these long tassels, hanging down behind near the ground, that the woman grasped as she struggled through the dense throng. The instant she touched it she felt a thrill of new life through her and knew herself healed. She quickly drew back into the crowd. But Jesus realized all that had happened as soon as did the woman. Many had touched him as he went along, but none with faith. It was faith, not contact with his dress, that healed, and turning as he felt the power go out of him, he said, “Who touched my garments?” Peter turned too, and repeated the Lord’s question to him, as though it was absurd to ask it with the multitude jostling them continually. But Jesus’ eyes had passed quickly from face to face and now had fallen in gentle authority upon the shrinking woman. She understood his mercy and her error; and hastening to him, flung herself at his feet and told him all. It was the confession he desired and the correction she needed, and he said, “Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee.”

All this caused delay in getting to the home of Jairus. He had left his daughter dying, and this

delay might lose the last precious chance. Alas! at this moment a messenger hurried to the father to report his worst fears. She was dead. The mourners had gathered, said the messenger, and added, "Worry not the Rabbi."

Jesus overheard the whispered words, and looked to see their effect upon Jairus. His faith, at best, had been weak; this would test it. It needed testing; now the worst had come; now only perfect faith would avail. "Fear not, only believe," said Jesus to him, as he faltered. Here was the house. Taking, for the first time, the inner circle of his disciples with him—Peter, James, and John—Jesus entered. When he had hushed the noise of the wailing women and the flutes and sought to comfort the mourners by telling them the maiden only slept, all laughed him to scorn. Upon this he put all out of the house, and with the parents and disciples, entered the silent, darkened chamber. By the bedside stands the Saviour, and taking the cold hand in his, speaks two words, "*Talitha cumi!*" "Maiden, arise!"

Life returned, and the maiden arose.

The faith of that father and mother had indeed been weak. They were not prepared for this, and astonishment, utter and dumbfounding, struck them. She was alive! and as the Saviour left the parents, he commanded them to give her some food to eat.

CHAPTER XIII

The Crisis in Galilee

SOME weeks have elapsed since the miracle in the house of Jairus, and it is winter, well along toward the end of the year 28, or early in 29 A. D. It was nearly a year before this that Jesus, returning from Judæa to begin his ministry in Galilee, stopped over the Sabbath at Nazareth and preached his first Messianic sermon in the synagogue of this, his native town.

His townsmen that Sabbath, charmed at first with his gracious words, but finally infuriated at his divine claims, dragged him from the synagogue and would have killed him, had he not escaped with his life "out of their midst." Now again, at the close of his Galilean ministry, after a year of activity, in which his great fame had been the theme of every Nazarene's thought and conversation, Jesus returns to Nazareth, hoping that his own people will receive him.

But as the leopard cannot change his spots nor the Ethiopian his skin, can Nazareth change in a twelve-month, though the very dead be raised (as actually had been done) to persuade her. Notwithstanding his mighty words and works, his far-flown fame, his numerous followers, his life of doing good, and his forgiveness in thus coming a second time to them, the Nazarenes saw, and saw with increased suspicion and contempt, in Jesus, not the Christ, but only the carpenter-son, who had been one of the lowly, obscure

men of their village. They had known not only him, but his parents before him, and his brothers and his sisters who were even then living in their midst in Nazareth. Looking at him as the son of Joseph the carpenter, and scorning his claims, these words and works of Jesus were absolutely unaccountable. "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" said they to each other. And they were astonished!

And this unbelief, which ended in mere astonishment, was so baffling that Jesus, in his turn, marveled at it. He had come this second time to his people to do for them all he had done for so many others, but because of their unbelief he was not able to do any mighty work among them. Laying his healing hands upon a few who received him, he cured them of their diseases, and departed, never to return.

Many causes combined to the sending out of the Twelve. The direct cause of the mission was the fact of vast numbers of Galileans whom Jesus had not visited, and who appealed to him as one flock without a shepherd, whom, now feeling the brevity of his ministry, he knew he could never visit.

This was a new mission, and he gave the Twelve special instructions for it. They were to go out as heralds of the Kingdom, not as preachers, for as yet they scarcely knew what Jesus meant by the Kingdom; they were to call all to repentance, declaring the Kingdom at hand, and were given power to prove their words. Thus proclaiming the Kingdom they then were to direct all who heard to Jesus for further light and truth. Two and two the disciples should go out, for mutual comfort and help, in order to meet

opposition and discouragement. With entire forgetfulness of self in the singleness of their purpose they were to take no money, no change of clothing, not even a staff for their journey. They were laborers, worthy of their hire to be supported. They should inquire, before entering a town, who in it were worthy to receive them, and going to such a house, they were to salute it with the ancient and meaningful, "Peace be with thee!" and the new peace of their Master would come into that house, if the children of peace were there. If not, then the blessing would return to their own heads; and if no other house received them, they must depart from that city and shake the very dust of the place off their feet as a testimony against it. On this journey they were to go only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," to Jews only, avoiding Samaria and the Gentile country.

It was to be strictly a Jewish mission in form and limitations. The disciples were not yet fitted nor prepared by insight and spirit to go beyond the Jews. The Jews were to be won first, and the Gentiles reached through them.

Like sheep among wolves they would be, needing the wisdom of serpents and the harmlessness of doves. When scourged and delivered up to councils and kings, they were not to be anxious about what defense to make. The Spirit would give them words. And looking farther ahead than this first journey, seeing the fierce strife his peace message will arouse in the selfish world, especially in Israel, and presaging, as a result of their false Messianic hopes, the coming struggle and downfall of the Jews, Jesus tells the disciples to endure to the end, for all such shall be saved; but warns them that they "shall not have gone over the

cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come"—a familiar Jewish expression, meaning to the Jews the destruction of Israel as a nation, which occurred in 70 A. D.

They would be misrepresented and, like their Master, belied and slandered, but let them fear not, all in the end would be clear. Fear not them, said Jesus further, that can kill only the body; rather fear God, whose power controlled the eternal issues of the soul. Nay, fear not at all! They were to go out confessing Christ to the world, and he would confess them before the Father.

In this hostile world his peace would often provoke war, even between nearest and dearest kin; but where a choice between father or mother and Christ became necessary, there should be no hesitation or compromise—all must be forsaken for him; even life itself when necessary. Love of life and kin need never conflict with love to Christ. Both loves can be infinite, for they differ in kind, not in degree. They exist side by side, but human love must never take *the place* of love of God.

Finally they were to be filled with his Spirit, taking his place in the world so that all who received them received him; and all they did for him, even the slightest thing, the mere giving of a cup of cold water to a little one in the Kingdom, in his name, should not go unrewarded.

Such were the prospects of their mission; the methods of their work; the conditions of discipleship; such their rewards.

While the disciples were out upon their mission Jesus was not idle. Accompanied by other disciples, some of the future Seventy, he continued his labors

among the Galilean cities, appointing a time for them to return and meet him at Capernaum.

It was during this absence of the Twelve that John's followers brought Jesus news of the Baptist's death, which occurred this spring (29 A. D.) at the fortress of Machærus. Nearly a year had passed since John's imprisonment, and Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, had been married several years to the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, whose domains bounded Herod's on the south. On a journey to Rome Herod had visited his half-brother, living as a private citizen in Jerusalem, and had fallen in love with Herodias, the ambitious wife of this brother. She agreed to marry Herod, he promising to divorce his wife. Herod went on to Rome, but meanwhile his wife heard of the plot, had herself conveyed to Machærus on pretext of a visit to the palace there, and thence fled with officers of her father's to her father's home in Arabia.

The adulterous marriage between Herod and Herodias took place against the protests of the people, and it continued, though John the Baptist, to Herod's very face, boldly rebuked it as unlawful. It was for this partly, and partly for fear of John's raising a rebellion at the instigation of the Pharisees, that Herod cast John into the dungeon of Machærus.

Machærus was a place of magnificence and power in the day of our history. Here John had waited and grown weary, when on the anniversary of Herod's accession to the tetrarchy, here in his fortress-palace, he made a grand banquet to his lords and captains and Galilean nobles.

The feast was on: it had become a drunken revelry.

As the professional dancers stop, a lithe, graceful maiden, in the prime of her young fresh beauty, glides into the hall and dances before the half-drunken king and his company. It is Salome, the daughter of the king's wife, the granddaughter of Herod the Great and Mariamne, a princess of the line of the Maccabees! And Herod was pleased, swearing in his coarse, maudlin approval to reward her even to the half of his kingdom. It was exactly as Herodias expected. Now she was to have her reward. She was awaiting her daughter, who hurried to ask her what to request of Herod. Without an instant's hesitation, for she had long waited the opportunity, the woman answered, "The head of John the Baptist." Revenged! John had openly denounced her sin, and the mighty prophet only had more power with the king than she.

Salome is the daughter of her mother. "Immediately, with haste," she reappeared before Herod and exclaimed, "My wish is that you give me here, on this dish, the head of John the Baptist."

Horror silenced and sobered the revelers. Herod knew whose request this was and why it was made. He knew John to be blameless, fearless, and righteous; he had often heard him alone in his palace; had done many things advised by John; and conscience, fear of the effect of the murder upon the people, and something of manhood still alive in him, had thus far restrained him from consenting to the death of John. Now at this cruel and sudden demand he feared and shrank; but he had sworn, and, false to all else, he would appear honorable in the eyes of his companions: he would honor his mad oath.

Without delay it was commanded, and one of the bodyguard left the palace on the errand of death.

In the shuddering stillness that had fallen upon the banquet hall vividly conscious was that company of it all as they waited in the horror of suspense.

They had not long to wait. Another creak as the heavy gate of the keep swung shut and all was over. On a golden charger from the banquet table Salome received the bloody quivering head of the mighty prophet, and gliding once more through the hall, bore the ghastly dish to her mother. Herodias was revenged. But "vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," and vengeance fell swift and terrible and sure upon the family of that Herod, ending, in 39 A. D., in exile to Gaul, where he was followed by Herodias. And Salome? Tradition tells us hers was an early and violent death from a fall on the ice.

As morning broke and the cold, pale light crept along the dark walls of Machærus, the disciples of John carried the headless body of their leader out to its grave, and came back to Galilee to tell Jesus.

About this time the twelve apostles returned to Jesus at Capernaum. Galilee was excited. John's death had stirred the country, and this, together with the preaching of the Twelve, now turned every eye upon Jesus as the last hope. He might yet meet their expectations and prove to be the Messiah. Even Herod now heard of Jesus. The bloody murder of John troubled Herod's guilty conscience; the sight of the ghastly head, borne by a maiden through his palace, haunted him; and hearing of Jesus, he trembled with dread, fearing it was the murdered prophet returned to torment him.

The shock of John's death, casting its prophetic shadow along his pathway, the apostles' return, weary

with labor, the constant pressure of throngs about him, caused Jesus to take his apostles apart with him to a desert place. They set out by boat, up the sea to Bethsaida-Julius, a little town just east of where the Jordan falls into the sea, in the territory of Philip. They tried to depart secretly, but were discovered and followed by thousands of people, who went around by the shore. It was only six miles over to the region of Bethsaida-Julius, and as the well-known sail crept over the calm sea, some of the eager multitude actually outran the boat and were waiting on the beach when Jesus landed.

The Passover was at hand, and many pilgrims, journeying toward Jerusalem, joined with the people and turned away to see Jesus, whom John's death and the apostles' preaching had made more than ever conspicuous. This accounts for the five thousand, "beside women and children," that were now rapidly gathering about Jesus. What a sight it was—men, women, and children streaming out to him in this desert place, without guide, food or shelter! How like sheep without a shepherd! And as here, in the ministry to this multitude, was the rest he most longed for, he descended among them, healing and teaching.

The day wore on, the "first evening" came, and already knowing what he would do, he called Philip, and, to test him as to how he would meet the great problem, says, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"

Philip was without resource. That Jesus could provide had not entered his mind. It would take two hundred denarii (nearly forty dollars) to buy even a mouthful apiece for all these, was his reply. Now the sun sank, the twilight began to gather, and the

night of the "second evening" had come. The disciples were anxious, and came begging Jesus to send the people away, for they had nothing to eat. "They need not depart; give ye them to eat," replied Jesus. In despair they told him that all the food they had brought with them were the five barley loaves and two small fishes, which the little lad, their attendant, carried.

He bade them bring that to him and make the multitude sit in companies of fifty and a hundred upon the grass. In the midst stood Jesus surrounded by the Twelve. They had not the insight to divine his purpose, but their obedience to his commands shows their implicit faith in his word. As the expectant host looked on, Jesus took the bread, blessed it and brake it and gave to the disciples, while they carried it to the companies, and all ate and were abundantly satisfied. At his command the Twelve again went out and returned to him with twelve large baskets filled with the fragments that were left. The multitude looked on in profound silence. Then they began to murmur to each other: "Truly this is the Prophet, the Coming One, the Messiah," for this miracle in every way accorded with their expectations of the Messiah. This miracle marks the height of Jesus' popular acceptance as a Prophet and the Messiah. The tide of popular belief and favor is at its height.

With the feeding of the five thousand came the crisis in the Galilean ministry. Never before had popular favor been so thoroughly upon Jesus' side. "This is truly the Coming One," the people murmured as they ate the loaves and fishes. At last he has come! The Promised One, the long-awaited Mes-

siah, the King of Israel, the Deliverer is come! The murmurers broke into open exclamations of joyous excitement, and a sudden purpose seized the people. They would proclaim him King. They had waited too long; if he were Messiah (and did not this miracle prove it?) then his disguise of modesty must be cast aside; he must assume the Kingship and save Israel. They surged forward to cry Hosannah to their Messiah-King. Jesus saw the movement, that they even meant to crown him by force, and seeing, too, his disciples looking on in evident approval, he sternly and quickly sent them to their boat with orders to return immediately to Capernaum, and chilling the wild ardor of the multitudes by telling them that he must go away to pray, he withdrew from them through the twilight and retreated again to the lonely mountaintop.

How often that early temptation of the wilderness returned! How far-reaching the effects of that first victory! Here in the solitude the Saviour prayed. He prayed through the long silent hours till the Nisan moon rose high over the lake and night wore away to the edge of dawn. It was the fourth watch. A wild spring wind was blowing across the lake, and the clear moon shone over a waste of tossing waters. Rising from his prayer of self-surrender and submission, knowing all that his disappointment of the common expectations and desires will cost him, Jesus turned to look away across the tumultuous waves toward Capernaum, whither had gone his band. As he looked he saw, far out on the lake, the disciples, with bare mast, rowing hard against the wind and waves, and almost overcome in the desperate battle.

It was in mercy that Jesus had sent them away in

the evening from the false excitement of the multitude, telling them that he would come back by land and meet them in the morning; meantime this adverse wind had sprung up; they were driven out of their course, and were spent with toil.

How wild the scene as the pen of the evangelist pictures it!

Spent with rowing, wrought upon by danger and excitement, the disciples were straining at the oars, when, of a sudden, there was a cry of terror from one of them as the figure of a man, an apparition, upborn by the waves, came across the water toward them. "A spirit," they cried, when in accents of that well-known voice came an answer to their cry: "It is I, be not afraid!"

Peter heard it and, in a tumult of hope and presumption, called, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water."

"Come!" was the reply of Jesus, for Peter by this experience only could be taught the folly of presumption.

Boldly he started toward his Master, took a few steps, feared, faltered, sank, and called for help. Jesus saved him and led him back to the ship, while some in the boat fell in worship before him, exclaiming for the first time, "Thou art the Son of God."

They had been driven far out of their course and landed in the early morning south of Capernaum upon the sandy beach of the plain of Gennesaret, where, hearing of Jesus' arrival, the inhabitants came swarming about him. So great had become his fame in these days that the sick merely pressed forward to touch him, and this Friday morning "as many as touched him were made whole."

His progress toward Capernaum was retarded by the sick who were laid all along his path. News of his coming which preceded him brought forth to meet him the people of Capernaum, among whom were many of the multitude miraculously fed the evening before, and many of the Pharisees and scribes who had come from Jerusalem on purpose to watch and entrap him. It was along the roadside, as the disciples were partaking of food, that these spies of the Sanhedrin came upon Jesus.

One of the three great charges which the Pharisees were developing against Jesus was that he was not the Messiah, but an impostor who was deceiving the people. This they did by showing how Jesus violated and allowed his disciples to violate the traditional law, which, from the Pharisees' point of view, involved greater guilt than a breach of the Mosaic Law. Among these traditions of the elders, the Pharisees were zealous for none more than for the ordinance of washing before meals. To neglect it was to be guilty of gross defilement. Bread eaten with hands unwashed was filth. Here they had found the disciples in the very act; nay, more, they had heard of the great miracle over at Bethsaida and had not Jesus allowed thousands to eat with unwashed hands? Contempt and indifference! Surcharging their question with the implication of all this, they point to the disciples and ask, "Why do they transgress the tradition of the elders, and eat with unwashed hands?"—to put a test question.

Not indifference only, but absolute antagonism to Jewish traditionalism is the spirit of Christ's crushing reply. A traditionalism that had become more precious and binding than the Scriptures; that was so

terribly profane as to teach that God spent his days studying the Scriptures, but his nights studying the Mishna; that pressed this ordinance of purification to the extent of declaring that even God himself submitted to it, met with hostility from Jesus.

It was a principle of rabbinism that no traditional law might contradict the Scriptures. The aim of Jesus' reply was to show how traditionalism *did* contradict Scripture, and so make it condemn itself. Bitter, terrible, true, were his words! Unanswerable and convicting!

It is necessary to bear in mind that when *Corban* was said of a thing, that is, when anything was dedicated to God by this vow, *Corban*, no one had any right to that thing; it was sacred to God. This vow was made the means to corruption. It is this that Jesus exposes.

He declared that Isaiah has well said that while you hypocrites honor God with your lips, your hearts are far from him; that laying aside God's commandments, you hold to traditions of men, and wash pots and cups; that, though Moses said, "Honor your father and mother," your tradition teaches that if a man says of anything *Corban*, that is, *a gift dedicated to God*, he may withhold it from his needy parents—making the word of God of no effect through your tradition.

The scribes again were silenced, but their case against Jesus was clearer and more deadly than heretofore. The truth of his argument they could not gainsay, but they could hate him the more for it; and his position, now plainly and positively taken in opposition to what they held as of supreme importance, gave them all they could desire of evidence to

prosecute their charge against him of being a deceiver and a misleader of the people.

Calling about him the multitude, he then addressed them upon the subject of purification, further elaborating the difference between the shallow externalism of the Pharisees and his own inward interpretation of the Law, crystallizing the whole thought by saying that, "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man."

It was later, when they reached Capernaum, that Jesus explained this un-Jewish definition to Peter by showing him that the heart, as the source of evil thoughts, was the only possible source that could pollute and defile. But even Peter had to be taught the lesson again.

It was Friday when Jesus entered Capernaum. It is now the Sabbath, and Jesus is speaking to the crowded congregation in the synagogue after the Thursday evening, when the throng tried to force his being proclaimed King. That miracle—feeding the five thousand—had brought to a head popular excitement over Jesus. Enthusiasm had been gathering headway for months, with every miracle rising higher, rolling faster, like a tidal wave, till, with this miracle, it crested, broke with a roar, and fell back foaming in enthusiasm chilled and with a sullen powerful undertow of misunderstanding, disappointment, doubt, and distrust. The thousands surging up to Jesus that night were of those who had been the more steadfast in the morning, but who, at his refusal to follow their wish, were flowing away from him and even carrying with them most of the believers in their current.

They had been fed in a manner more miraculous than their fathers in the wilderness, and this work of all Jesus had done most nearly accorded with their conception of what their Messiah should do. On the other hand this extreme modesty of Jesus harmonized in no respect with the pictured splendor of their King, and their attempt to proclaim him King was to make him assume a rôle in keeping with their expectations. Not thwarted, but fooled, duped!—and few only of that multitude slept upon the green that night awaiting dawn, still with hope.

When day came, Jesus was gone—how, they knew not. Hiring some fishing boats that the gale had driven on shore, a remnant of the people came over to Capernaum seeking him. It is in answer to their question of how he came hither that Jesus is now speaking in the synagogue. His searching reply, “Ye seek me not because ye saw in my works the signs of the true Messiah but because ye did eat of the loaves *and were filled*,” uncovered the spirit that had animated them all along. They now sought more; but that was at an end; and, in words that other men than those who listened have found “hard,” Jesus told them plainly what was the real bread he brought and what the real life was that his bread sustained. But the taste of the loaves was still in their mouths, the fabulous banquets that the Messiah should bring were spread before their imaginations, and the metaphor of the Master’s words was lost upon them and they broke out, “Lord, evermore give us this bread!”

Then it was he said, “I am the bread of life”—declared that he had come from heaven as God’s Messenger. At this assumption of divinity the scribes murmured. But they might murmur now! Throw-

ing aside all reserve, he answered them in language still more strikingly symbolical, but in every sense Hebraic, and which, if they would, they might have understood. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Angry words interrupted him again. But their contentions and sneers left him unmoved and undaunted. He was all he claimed to be. He knew it—and faced them calmly and authoritatively; they knew it—and feared to touch him. Over and over he repeated the high claim and the offensive words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "My flesh is meat, my blood is drink." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life."

"Hard," they murmured, and the revulsion commenced. The revolt set in. It showed on all their faces. It spread from scribe to fisherman. It affected even the disciples. At last the disenchantment of all their illusions had come; their carnal conceptions were blasted, their hopes at an end. Disappointment was overwhelming. All they most cherished and longed for, he stood in absolute antagonism to. This was no Messiah for them; they would have no part in his kingdom, and they turned away. The disciples turned too.

"Doth this offend you?" he asked. "If so"—and he pressed the hard truth home harder—"what will ye think when ye 'see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Then summing up and interpreting the metaphorical language, he said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; . . . the *words* that I speak

unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." At this even the Twelve showed signs of wavering, and turning to them with an infinite tenderness and pathos he said, "Will ye also go away?" and Peter, impulsive and courageous, exclaimed, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

CHAPTER XIV

The Transfiguration

EVENTS now move rapidly. When the talk in the synagogue of Capernaum was finished, the disillusioning of the people was complete. That Sabbath ended, Jesus again sought to escape the tumult of disappointment, defection, and open hostility, and with the disciples, secretly departed across the hills to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus sorely needed solitude, and his disciples must be kept from the spreading contagion of this poisonous misunderstanding and hate. The shadow of death was rapidly deepening. Lowering signs of the hate-storm were everywhere gathering. Now in the remote western hills of Galilee, in a private home, he sought refuge.

But again quiet was denied him. He was too well known in the land. Report of his presence spread, and among others, a Syro-Phœnician woman, a heathen, hastened to beg him to heal her demonized daughter. Mighty mother love, agony of appeal, the apparent indifference of Jesus, the burst of truth, the leap of faith, and the answer of Jesus make up this Galilean miracle.

His seeming reluctance to grant the distressed mother's wish needs explanation. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" she exclaimed, and he answered her not a word. Why? Because being a heathen, and so understanding nothing of Christ's

mission, her address, "Son of David," meant that Jesus stood to her for a mere miracle-worker and Jew. And this was the view of the crowds, and as yet largely the view of his own disciples, a view he had all along endeavored to dispel. He *must* grant her prayer, but to have done so, with the disciples looking on, in answer to that form of address would have been to undo all he had taught them about his mission, and to have performed a miracle as a Jew, the Son of David, not as a Saviour, the Son of God. So he delays that he may teach her who he really is, and to teach the Jewish disciples on the one hand, and this Gentile woman on the other, what their mutual relations were, and how they stand related to him.

The disciples, sharing the woman's view that Jesus was a Jew only, the Son of David, and, as such, would have nothing to do with a heathen, asked him to send the woman away. "I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," was his reply, which was true as regards his own mission; for, as he implied in this answer, it was not his, but his disciples'—Israel's—mission to convert the world. But the woman saw a personal meaning in this answer. Flashed the thought: If, as the Son of David, he comes only to Jews, I must claim help on other grounds, and falling at his feet she cried, "*Lord*, help me!" To her then he answered, lest she might still be thinking of him as a mere Jew: "But it is not meet to cast the children's bread to the dogs. If to you I am a Jewish Messiah, I must treat you Jewishly—as a dog." Then came the burst of full light, who he was, and their relation; and she rejoins instantly, "Truth, Lord! But the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from *their* master's table! If I am a dog, I am *your* dog and you

are *my* Master. Ownership and its claims exist between us. I have a *right* to ask this blessing of you." That deep discernment, far deeper than the disciples had yet shown, raised her from *beneath* the table to a place *at* the table. He bade her go—having her desire.

Privacy in the region of Tyre and Sidon was at an end. Leaving the friendly house, Jesus went north through Sidon, made a long circuit and came out into the territory of Philip and descended into the Decapolis—the confederacy of "Ten Cities"—stopping near where he fed the five thousand.

But here he could not be hid. Great multitudes quickly gathered about him, bringing all their diseased for him to heal. He cured them, but he sighed as he put his fingers into the deaf ears and upon the blind eyes, for though, by the very nature of his being, he must heal, still he sighed that the people were concerned for the body only. The people followed him so closely now that it became necessary again to feed a multitude of four thousand when bread could not be obtained.

Departing from here, Jesus came over to the western coast to Dalmanutha, a little place near Tarichœa, in the southwest corner of the Decapolis. Here his enemies, the Pharisees, met him and hoping to embroil him in discussion, they asked him, in accordance with rabbinic notions and practice, for a sign from heaven in confirmation that his words and works were of God.

It was a temptation. A sign to these spies, before whom already he had done openly all his mighty works! Strange! They could discern in the sky what the morrow's weather would be, but they could not

see the stormcloud gathering on their country's horizon; could not hear the thunder of their nation's coming doom. And these men ask a spiritual sign! No sign but the sign of Jonah's repentance-call should be given them.

He refused to enter into conflict with them, and took the boat again and came up to Bethsaida-Julius. It was a sad and silent voyage. Little was said, for deep dejection covered the hearts of Master and disciples. He warned them against the leaven of the Pharisees—the leaven of lack of faith as manifested in their desire for a sign—for it was liable to poison them also. The disciples misunderstood the figure. In their hurry they had forgotten bread; there was only one loaf in the boat. They looked at each other; what did he mean? Ah! he suspected them of purposely forgetting bread that they might compel him to feed them again miraculously and so force him to show them the sign asked for by the Pharisees. After healing a blind man, Jesus went over into Capernaum.

It was at this time in Capernaum that Jesus' brethren met him with the request to go up to the feast of Tabernacles, which was then at hand, and show himself to the nation openly. How little they believed in Jesus! How narrow and false their thoughts of him! "A pretty Messiah thou," they said, contemptuously, "hid here in remote Galilee, working miracles before the superstitious; preaching to the ignorant rabble; followed by a few fishermen and publicans of no reputation! Thou who dost claim to be Messiah, yet cannot meet the challenge of the Pharisees for a sign. Who art unwilling to preach to the intelligence of Jerusalem, who dare not face the

scribes, go up to the capital and show thyself where all men may see thee work, where the teachers may test thee, and the nation accept thee!"

Such was their taunt, and temptation—the temptation of the wilderness again. But he would not reveal himself thus. His time had not yet come. He would not go up to the feast for any such purpose. But the time would come; he would reveal himself, but not as they wished. His brethren went on. He lingered.

Jerusalem was aglow with gay festivity. The feast of Tabernacles (this year from October 11 to 18) was the most joyous of them all. The city was crowded. The feast was in progress, and there was but one theme in the minds and upon the lips of all—Jesus. No one dared mention him openly for fear of the rulers; but furtively all went about looking for him, and under their breath men whispered wonderingly about him. Had he come? Where was he? Who was he? The whole nation was excited over him. The multitudes were divided in their opinions of him; some were for him, others against him. The Sanhedrin had already decreed his death, which was well known to all of Jerusalem but not to the pilgrims.

Suddenly, four or five days before the close of the feast, in the great porch of Herod, on the south side of the Temple, where thousands of worshipers were gathered, discussing the burning question of the Messiah, Jesus appeared and began to speak. The power of his words astounded everybody. There were the scribes, the elders, the common people, and all exclaimed: "How does this man know literature, never having learned?"

In Jerusalem a teacher was credited in the measure

that his teaching accurately represented what had been taught by the rabbis of old, by Moses, and by God. On that ground Jesus made the highest claim for his words. "I do know letters," in substance he replied, "though I have not learned in your schools, nor been taught by your rabbis: Here is the test, the proof of my claims: Lay these teachings to your hearts and you will know whether they be of God or of man."

"I am not seeking my own glory," he continued, "but the glory of him that sent me. You do not accept me nor perceive my real mission and spirit. You violate the spirit of the Law and you try to kill me." Some in the crowd did not know of the decree of the Sanhedrin and thought Jesus crazy for saying this, for they saw no one trying to kill him. But the men of Jerusalem in the throng knew and already wondered that he was allowed to speak. Some asked if the rulers were shaken in their belief concerning him, but others answered, with a sneer, "When the Christ comes, no one will know when nor from where. But this fellow! Everybody knows he is a Galilean."

"True," replied Jesus, "you think you know, and you would know if I had come of myself. But I am not come of myself. He that sent me is the real One. Him ye know not."

That infuriated a part of the crowd, and they would have mobbed him, but the dignity of this defenseless Man overawed them. These words led others to believe, and they dispersed for the night murmuring, "Christ, when he cometh, will do no more miracles than this One did."

All this had been watched by the rulers. They

had a conference, and orders were given to the Temple guard to seize Jesus on first opportunity. He was aware of their purposes, and on a succeeding day, as he saw the officers of the guard skulking behind the pillars, said to those about him so openly these spies could hear, "Yet a little while am I with you, then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come."

The "last, the great day of the feast" came, and Jesus again is in the Temple. The priest with the golden pitcher filled at the Pool of Siloam has returned and poured the holy water into the altar amid the rejoicings of the people. The rites ended; the people's thanksgiving prayer died away; a solemn hush had fallen, when, from among the crowd of worshipers, spake One in tones that broke the silence, "If any one thirst, let him come unto me and drink!" It was the voice of Jesus. Never yet had he so solemnly, so authoritatively declared himself. Instantly there was commotion. Awed and thrilled some exclaimed, "This is the Prophet!" Others grasping more, cried out, "This is the Christ!" But the Judæan Jews, more bitter than ever, sneered, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" and they would have laid hands on him, but they dared not.

There was rage among the priests too, when the officers they had sent to arrest him returned empty-handed. They half confessed Jesus' power over them, which only added fuel to the hate-fire of the priests. "Why have ye not brought him?" they asked.

Shamefaced the minions replied: "No man ever spake like this man."

Then spake Nicodemus, the night disciple, still

under cover of his timidity, yet unable wholly to restrain himself, who, asking that Jesus have a trial, was hushed with the contemptuous reply, "Art thou also of Galilee?"

There was an extra day (the Octave) added to this feast and on this day Jesus once more appeared, and led the Pharisees by unanswerable arguments—yet with none effect—to see their own bondage to sin; his God-sent mission and their eternal death if they did not accept him as their Messiah; and closed his revelation of himself by declaring, "Before Abraham was, I am!"

The next Sabbath, as Jesus was passing out of the Temple, he came upon a man who was born blind. The disciples, still holding the teaching of their rabbis, asked who had sinned, the man or his parents. Jesus here teaches that his mission is to remove all sin, the basal cause of all disease. He answered, "These things are that the works of God might be made manifest in him." Then half to himself, it seems, sublimely aware of his divinity, he says: "I am the light of the world," and forthwith makes the blind man to see.

As the blind man returned from the Pool of Siloam, where Jesus sent him to wash, many began to question him, to whom he said, "A Man named Jesus cured me." The miracle soon reached the ears of the Pharisees and they immediately summoned the man before them. He told them the same straightforward story. They were confounded. Disputes burned hot in their learned circle. Could they turn this against Jesus? Unable to shake the man they called the parents, hoping to prove that the son never had been blind. The parents said he was their son and was

born blind, but fearing excommunication, they would know nothing of the cure, and shifted all responsibility back to the son. He was equal to it. The doctors solemnly and coaxingly renewed their efforts on the youth, but he was neither to be driven nor drawn to deny his Benefactor, and he answered that he did not know whether or not Jesus was the sinner they called him; but one thing he did know, that whereas he was once blind, now he saw. Again they pressed him, but he was in no mood for learned foolery and turned upon them with such wanton contempt and disregard for their long robes and gray beards that the whole bench was upset. "Will ye also be his disciples?" he sneered.

They were wild with fury, and lost control of themselves and their cause too. The simple, straightforward, courageous beggar was more than a match for them in argument on their own ground; and when no longer able to defend themselves, these doctors cast him out.

He was excommunicated—more lost to society and hope than a leper. But hearing this, Jesus sought him out, revealing his divinity by his faith.

Perhaps it was this same day that Jesus drew this picture of pastoral life in the allegory of the good shepherd.

Two thoughts of that must be touched: First, Christ is the Door into the fold of God, the kingdom of heaven. There is no other entrance. All who would enter into the truth and love of the Father must enter by Christ, the only Door. Second, the thought of the character of the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life (of his own willing) and takes it up again, for the

life of his sheep, in order that all his sheep, Jews and Gentiles, may be gathered into one flock to have him for their one Shepherd.

All was discord and division in Jerusalem and in the hearts of all the people concerning Jesus. The leaven of the Pharisees was working everywhere, even in the breasts of the Twelve, notwithstanding the warning. The Pharisees' plot was hourly thickening about him, and because he had much to tell the disciples he must remove them from this atmosphere to some place where he may prepare them for the approaching ordeal.

Far away through Judæa and Galilee beyond the northern border-citadel of Dan, to the region about Cæsarea Philippi, to Mount Hermon, Jesus leads the little band, and here, for days, he prays with them and instructs them until the disciples wake for the first time to a realization of the true personality of their Teacher, and Peter confesses him the Christ of God.

That revelation came as the general impression of all his associations with Jesus, and as the special result of days of prayer and teaching here in the sublime solitudes about Hermon. The leaven of the Pharisees had touched the disciples. Their belief had been clouded by the conflicting opinions of the enemies of their Master. Like a sudden burst of light through stormclouds, flashed this revelation.

"Who do men say that the Son of man is?" he inquired. There were many differing opinions—all wrong. "But who say ye that I am?" asked he quickly, laying stress upon the "ye." Then came Peter's confession, the first confession of the church, upon which,

as upon a rock of faith and spiritual insight, "I will build my church," replied Jesus as the great confession filled his heart. And to such spirit and faith should be given the keys to the doors of spiritual things and power to discern and judge.

This spiritual conception of the disciples opened the way at last—even made it necessary—for Jesus to show them the whole plan of his Messianic mission, even the cross, though as yet they must not proclaim it. They were not yet prepared for that, not yet prepared to understand or believe it, for, as Jesus sketches with few but awful strokes the picture of his death, the passionate, human-hearted Peter interrupts him with a beseeching rebuke, "This shall not be unto thee." Anything to the Jew but a crucified Messiah! It was once more the temptation of the wilderness, and again Jesus had to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

The revelation was a crushing disappointment; the rebuke was severe, and, as if in sympathy, that the truth might be made more reasonable, and easy to bear, Jesus called a multitude about him and taught them that divine lesson of sacrifice and submission, saying, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Six days have passed; days of intimate, patient instruction by the Son, days of unbroken communion with the Father, here in the solemn silences that brood over majestic Hermon. The region about Hermon is grand beyond any scenery in Palestine. Here is majesty of mountain, music of falling water, contrast and mingling of light and shade, richness of verdure and purity and vitality of air equaled, in all the compass of the wide horizon, only in mightier

Lebanon. Oh, glorious snowclad Hermon! Mountain Chief of Palestine!

These six days following Peter's great confession are spent in the glades at the foot of Hermon. Now with Peter and James and John, the three understanding and loving him best, Jesus is ascending high up the mountain. The sun is setting behind the snowy summit, which glows against the burning sky with a myriad varying tints and flaming colors. Millions of crystal prisms catch the streaming light and spread it, wave upon wave of blending hue, in a transfiguring halo of gleaming glory about the mountain's sublime head. Long shadows come galloping down the gorges and through the valleys, running far across the lowlands, till one, outreaching its fellows, points a dark peak against the eastern horizon wall. Green leaves and deep grass, fed by dews distilled from the almost eternal snows above, clothe every valley, and climbing vines cling in rich festoons over the face of every ragged cliff. There is a delicious cool and vigor in the air, dropping from the heights, laden with the breath of snows. Silence everywhere, broken through with gurgle, splash, and roar of mountain waters! Soon the light begins to die, the peak gleams gold and rosy, fades and shines again, now cold and white; the dark blue deepens in the sky; pale and pure and far away the stars come out; the moon rises, and over peak and plain and sea lie the long bars of dreamful light and shadow.

In that evening hour, high up on the mountain, the Master and the three disciples prayed. They prayed, and, exhausted with the long ascent, the disciples fell asleep, while Jesus prayed on, apart and alone; prayed

for these three that their holden eyes might be opened to see the reality of this Divine Sonship, that through the death struggle coming they might not be lost; prayed too for himself, for strength, that he might in the approaching conflict still be victor even over death.

And lo, as he prayed, a strange and beautiful light! It woke the disciples. In a half-stupor of sleep, dazed by the mysterious radiance, they beheld the face of Jesus changed. It shone with an effulgence more splendid than the sun; and gleaming splendor bathed his being till the very garments glistened, white as no fuller on earth could whiten them. Jesus is transfigured before them! His glory outshines the sunset glory of Hermon, and dims the moonlight on the crystal peaks. And see! On either side of him a glorified figure, Moses and Elijah, the founder and the reformer of Israel, speaking with him of his death which he shall accomplish at Jerusalem.

The three gaze speechless at the vision, when, as they look, over Hermon spreads a cloud, luminous, refulgent with a light not of night or day, rolling out and down till the vision of the Christ is wrapped within it. An ecstasy of confusion and fearful joy possess the disciples. Peter feared his Lord was about to be taken up in this cloud-chariot of splendor and cried out to detain him, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But the gleaming cloud poured on over them, and terror seized them, when, from the midst of the glory spake the voice of Heaven: "This is my beloved Son. Hear him."

They fell, overcome with the heavenly glory, and

when, at last, they lifted up their eyes, the cloud had passed, the light was gone and they saw with them Jesus only, and heard him say, "Arise, be not afraid."

The disciples had seen the ineffable glory of their transfigured Lord, but they did not understand that thus he would appear *after* his death; for though he now told them again that he must die, they were still awaiting a Jewish Messiah, and could not put a literal meaning into the Master's words.

They pondered upon the mystery of the vision; of why he bade them keep it secret till after his death; and of what that death could mean, as they descended the mountain on the morrow; and finally one of the three asked him why the scribes had always taught that Elijah would come before the Messiah and restore all things. Jesus answered, that, to all who would receive him, John the Baptist was that prophet, for his was wholly a mission of preparation. And once more he tried to make them see that as the real Messiah his reign was not what they hoped for, a reign of temporal power, but one of spiritual power, by love alone.

Reaching the foot of the mountain, they found the other nine disciples surrounded by a great concourse of excited people. A father had brought his lunatic son for Jesus to heal, and not finding him, had asked the disciples for help, who in their presumption had tried and failed. The scribes were jeering at the disciples in their weakness, confusion, and failure. But here stood Jesus, the light of the transfiguration still about him, and the crowd beholding him, ran forward and saluted him.

The pitiable story was soon told Jesus, and with

an exclamation of pain at the faithlessness of the disciples he turned him to the father, who was kneeling, crying, "If thou canst, help us!" Answered Jesus, "If *thou* canst, all things are possible to him that believeth." He could, he did, though with doubt all about him. "Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief!" The essence of all faith! Bold yet fearful; trusting in the certainty of faith; clinging in the consciousness of unbelief. That faith was honored, and the raving child was given again to his father, restored.

Now from Cæsarea Philippi the little band began a slow journey back through Galilee, avoiding all publicity, ceasing all public work; for Jesus had just one object to accomplish now before his death in the training of the Twelve; to prepare them for all that was to follow and for the work of continuing his mission. The burden of all his preaching now was his death and its meaning. The words sank deep into their minds but seem not to have reached their hearts with anything but pain and doubt.

They were aware that some great crisis was close at hand, but what could it be, save the last complete Messianic revelation and the glorious proclamation of the King? The hope burned in their hearts and as they journeyed, the nine, grown jealous at the favors shown Peter and James and John, began to discuss secretly who should be first in the new kingdom, their thoughts bent upon an earthly, Jewish kingdom, with Jesus on David's throne.

Jesus was aware of the misplaced ambition but let it continue until they reached Capernaum. Here the occasion of the Temple tax led Peter again to assume pre-eminence over the other disciples, and in their

jealousy, it seems, one of them bluntly asked Jesus who was to be greatest in the new government.

But, first, this miracle of the Temple tax: every Jew was required to pay this half a shekel redemption money, as a yearly tax for the Temple. Accordingly, as soon as Jesus reached Capernaum, the collector, in awe of him, yet evidently attempting to humiliate him (for it seems the rabbis and prophets were exempted from this tax), asked Peter if his Master did not pay the tax. "Yes," was the impetuous answer, but immediately, feeling the incongruity of the world Redeemer's paying redemption money for his own soul, Peter hastened in shame and trouble to tell Jesus. But Jesus divined it all, and forestalled him, saying in a friendly and intimate way: Simon, do kings take tolls and taxes from their own sons or those not their children?" There could be but one answer. "Then," added Jesus, "I, the Son of the King, am free; but though I am not obliged to pay it, yet I will freely, lest I should put a stumbling-block in their way. Go to the sea and open the mouth of the first fish you catch, and there you shall find the money. Pay it for me."

Now comes the disciple with the selfish question of who should be greatest, and Jesus' immortal sermon on true greatness. And he called a little child unto him; and when he had taken him in his arms, he said, "Except ye be converted, changed from your selfish, conscious ambition, and become like this little, trustful, simple, happy child, absolutely free from all self-seeking, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. For he that is *least* among you, he shall be greatest."

As Jesus continued with the child upon his knee,

John's conscience began to trouble him; for back along the road, he had found a man casting out demons in Christ's name, whom, when he would not follow with the disciples, John had rebuked.

"Did I rightly?" he asked Jesus.

"No," was the reply; "however mistaken the teaching, if one is acting in my name, do not rebuke and offend him, for he that is not against us is for us."

And this gave the Master opportunity for his further, deeper teaching on offenses, and for his principle of eternal forgiveness. And Peter, who perhaps had been offended by the jealous disciples that very day, thinking he had measured the Master's meaning, said, "Shall I forgive a brother seven times?" Rabbism said forgive three times; if he did it seven times, would not that meet the Saviour's demands? Oh, Peter! does the Master *count* offenses forgiven? Is the limit seven?

"Nay," answers Jesus, "there is no limit; not seven, but seventy times seven."

The end of the summer had come; and the end of the Galilean ministry had come. All that mighty words and works could do for Galilee had been done. Jesus, as Messiah, had been seen and heard. His popularity with the lowly, as prophet and miracle-worker, was far-reaching; but only a few obscure, un-influential publicans, fishermen, and ignorant country folk, in varying degrees believed his divine claims; and scarcely twelve in all the world understood, even partially, the mystery of his mission. They but dimly saw his revelation of God and how he was saving them; they yet not more than half dreamed the spiritual character of his kingdom, nor did they guess the

import of the rising hostility and the dark teachings about the approaching death.

But association with him and his words had revealed to them his divinity. They believed and trusted him as the Christ of God.

Over against this belief and trust of the few was the aggressive hostility of the disappointed many, led directly by the hating Pharisees, and concentrating rapidly at Jerusalem.

Such was the situation this November, 29 A. D. Now "the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." To die? No. Up to this time Jesus had not openly declared himself the Messiah to the Jewish world. His words and works had testified; John too had testified, but now the time has come when to the nation Jesus must testify to his Messiahship, that, if he is rejected, it be by the nation, not in ignorance, but knowing from his own lips that they crucify the Christ, their Messiah. For this end he starts for Jerusalem, the nation's capital.

In its single aim and object, we must think of this journey as one and continuous, though Jesus was long upon the way and taught in many places.

It was with a large company of friends and followers that Jesus started from Capernaum taking the direct road which ran through Samaria. But reaching the Samaritan border, he was refused entrance into the border town, and, turning with his band toward the Jordan, he crossed and entered the province of Peræa. Here, that preparation might be made for his large following, and that all towns into which he might enter, should be made aware that the Messiah

was approaching, Jesus selected seventy disciples from the band and sent them two by two, into all the cities, proclaiming the coming of Jesus.

Their mission was very like that of the Twelve, but now it was Jesus the Messiah, himself, coming, rather than his kingdom at hand; and the message was given to Jew and Gentile alike. As fast as those sent to the nearest towns returned with a welcome, Jesus would enter those towns, teaching and healing. The Peræan ministry was begun, to continue as Jesus journeyed steadily onward his face set toward Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XV

His Face Set Toward Jerusalem: The Peræan Ministry

THUS the Peræan, the third and last great stage of the ministry began. It differed in some respects from the Judæan and Galilean ministries. Roughly it covered the closing six months of Christ's life, from November, 29 A. D., to the beginning of the Pass-over the next April.

Peræa was that part of the domain of Herod Antipas lying along the Jordan's east bank from the town of Pella in the north to the river Arnon on the south. It had no very distinct eastern boundary. The land was fertile, thickly built with towns, and peopled by mixed Jews and Gentiles. Here, naturally, opposition from the high-caste Jews was not so bitter and bigoted. The purpose to proclaim himself openly and finally in Jerusalem was the goal toward which through all these months he steadily moved; yet the atmosphere pervading the vast multitudes that flocked to this last teaching was quieter, more hopeful and receptive than that found of late in Galilee.

But the sky is darkening. The lowering clouds are charged with storm, and mutterings of that Pharisaic hate break continually with fateful warnings through the calm and sunshine of these last days.

Peræa, though essentially heathen, had not escaped the Messianic fever of these stirring times. All the

country had talked and wondered about Jesus, and the message of the seventy declaring him to be the Messiah was enthusiastically welcomed up and down the land.

Two by two the seventy returned to Jesus, joyful at their reception; elated in the consciousness of their mighty power over disease, and exultant over the prospect of the rapidly coming Kingdom. He tells them not to rejoice in this power to heal, for there is something of larger, higher import than the body; rather, they should rejoice, because their names are written in heaven.

Jesus came with a twofold purpose: to teach man what God expected of man—a life of perfect obedience; and, secondly, to reveal to man what man could expect of God—infinite forgiveness, help, and love. He succeeded in his purposes by living obediently to God even unto death, and by his own words and spirit making us see in him the forgiveness, help, and love of the Father.

Time now is short, every moment is of importance, and the miracles are all but lost sight of, while the parables come prominently forward. As Jesus journeyed on among the towns, a lawyer, a keen, skillful handler of the canon Law, apparently without malice, merely as one teacher to a rival Teacher, for the sake of a dialectical encounter—to test Jesus—asked, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

The only Jewish conception of the “way” to eternal life was the way of good works—merit. This was a challenge, and the lawyer’s weapon was the Mosaic Law. Adroitly parrying the thrust, Jesus meets him with the same weapon and with a single return forces

him to the defensive. "What is written in the Law?" The scribe had to answer. Supreme love to God and neighborly love to man was the essence of the Law. "Right," answered Jesus. "Do this and thou shalt live." The lawyer was beaten and so easily that he was amazed and ashamed. The crowd appreciated this kind of a contest and highly enjoyed the lawyer's discomfiture. But unwilling to acknowledge his defeat, he opened the fight again and tried to throw the question back upon his answer, saying, "But who is my neighbor?"

Oh, this was a master question. The greatest Rabbi in the land was he who had this involved point most fully in hand; who with the nicest distinctions could show the least number of neighbors. This was *the* question of Judaism; generations of scribes and lawyers had spent their lives mastering its myriad hair-splitting arguments. How would Jesus answer it? We can almost hear the ring of triumph in the lawyer's voice. But Jesus had an answer, totally un-Jewish, and far removed from rabbinism. Not as a Jewish Rabbi, but as the Teacher of humanity Jesus replied with the parable of the good Samaritan, opening a vista of kindly feeling as wide as the world, as inclusive as the needs of all mankind.

Having finished the parable, he turned and asked the lawyer, "Which, the priest, Levite, or Samaritan, was neighbor to the wounded man?"

The lawyer would not speak the hated name "Samaritan," but was compelled to answer, and said, "He that showed mercy on him."

It was somewhere about this time that the disciples, coming unawares upon the Master as he prayed, were

so moved by the natural union of Jesus with his Father that they seem to have felt for the first time how imperfectly they prayed, and asked Jesus to teach them.

He recalled to their minds the prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, saying, "When you pray, say, Our Father, who art in heaven."

The disciples were to pray to God as to a loving Father, and Jesus went on in the parable of the friend coming at midnight to teach them to persevere in their prayer, asking, seeking, knocking earnestly; for though there may be special difficulties in the way, yet *every one* that so prays shall receive his desire.

Like a panther across the trail of its victim, the Pharisees again cross the path of Jesus. Jerusalem was their lair. Thither they were tracking him; occasionally—as in this instance of his healing the possessed man—breaking cover to snap at him and show the fangs of their bitter enmity. But this show of hostility, so fraught with meaning, did not check him in his onward progress, nor turn him aside from the pathway to Jerusalem.

It was the old charge of working in the name of Satan that they flung again in his face. How his searching reply uncovers their hating hearts, their self-willed deception! How could Satan by his own might cast out himself? A house divided against itself will fall. This was an evil spirit; only a good Spirit, only God, could cast out Satan. Then this miracle was a witness that the kingdom of God had come among them.

The Pharisees had no answer for this scorching fire of truth, and fell back on their old device, calling for

a sign. He turned them to Nineveh and to the Queen of Sheba. The warning of Jonah woke the Ninevites to repentance; even the report of Solomon's wisdom brought the queen from distant Sheba, because she needed and longed for more and better wisdom than she possessed. "But you," said Jesus, "you Pharisees lack all sense of sin; you are supremely satisfied with your wisdom, and the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba shall rise up in judgment against you." Israel had indeed driven out the one demon, most dreaded, Beelzebub—idolatry; she had swept and garnished the house with Pharisaism, but had left it empty of God, and the demon, returning under guise, had taken with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself—the evils of Pharisaism—and now, the last stage of Judaism in their idolatrous study of form and law is worse than that before God led the people from the darkness of early idolatry.

The throng listening to this marvelous teaching was "gathered *thick* together," and it is little wonder that a woman in the crowd, some mother, lifted up her voice in blessings on the mother that bore and nourished such a Son. But not as the Son of a woman, rather as the Son of God, not as man but as Messiah, Jesus would make them think of him, and he answered, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that [in Me] hear the word of God, and keep it." Drawing his discourse to a close, he added: As the object of a lamp was to give light and not to be hidden in a vault nor under a bushel, so his truth was not to be hidden in some dark vault of their unreceptive hearts where its light would only intensify their darkness, but was to be received and placed where it could shed light through every room of life's house.

It was some days later, and in a different town, that a Pharisee, who seems to have heard of Jesus only as a great Rabbi, invited him, in purest courtesy, to dinner. The Pharisee's surprise at Jesus for not washing before the meal gives occasion for another anti-Pharisaic discourse, the last and most advanced stage in that teaching recorded by Luke.

A dramatic scene! See the flush of anger overspread the Pharisee's face as Jesus ignores this most-cherished ceremony. His guest has insulted him, broken the law and spurned the holiest, most binding of the traditions. Why, Shammai and Hillel had waged long and bitter war as to *where the towel was to be placed*, and here Jesus ruthlessly tramples upon the whole sacred rite! Jesus understood, and at the thought of Israel's sublime religion spent on such lifeless minutiae—rites that ignored spiritual corruption by directing all religious energy to the purification of cups and hands—his righteous wrath kindled, and he not only ignored but openly exposed the hypocrisy of this outward purification—which left untouched the utter corruption of their inward defilement—in terms more solemn and bitter, with words more terrible than he had yet pronounced upon them.

He struck at the root of Pharisaism; he shattered its principles; he denounced its very spirit as contrary to truth and righteousness. All that it was, all that it was not, positively and negatively it worked for what was unlike the true spirit of God; holding the key of knowledge, but neither going in itself nor allowing anyone else to enter. Nay, it had even killed the messengers of God, as soon it was to kill him in the name of religion.

There was wild disorder in the house. We can

appreciate how the "scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth."

This last scene is another of those infinite contrasts in the character of Jesus: the meek and lowly One, here, independent of all earthly authority, conscious of himself as an absolute law unto himself.

The excitement spread like wild fire, bringing an "innumerable multitude" about Jesus in such haste and confusion that they "trod one upon another." The mob took its temper from the hostile Pharisees, and became so ugly and threatening that Jesus, always calmest in storm, found it necessary to steady his disciples, saying, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body." It was then that he again warned them against the leaven of the Pharisees—their hypocrisy, ingrained and utter—lest they too become self-deceivers, pretending to be other than they were, to conceal their real character.

Notwithstanding the violence of this crowd, the general impression of Jesus now was Messianic. One man in the multitude, later, even asked him to be arbiter in dividing an inheritance; but putting aside the request as entirely outside him, Jesus answered with that striking parable of the rich fool, pointing with terrible vividness the uncertainty of life, the folly of coveting this life's goods to the neglect of God, and closing its application to his friends, with the earnest admonition to lay aside all anxiety in their work for God's kingdom; for they could be consoled by the promises of the Father, whose care it was to give them all good things.

Here he told them of his going away, and of how

they should wait his return, they little understanding the solemn warning or what was the character of this coming after death.

There is hardly a thread of narrative now, and the story of Jesus at this period is the record of his teaching. He was passing from town to town working slowly toward Jerusalem to attend the feast of Dedication (December), but only here and there can we trace the footsteps, all being covered with the sermons by the way.

In the slaughter of the Galileans by Pilate we have a vivid picture of the terrible conditions of the time, and see the grounds for Jesus' repeated warnings. In the continued attacks of the Pharisees, calling forth such rebukes and awful denunciations as the parables of the rich fool, the barren fig tree, the great supper; in the bitter answer to the chief ruler in the synagogue and the apostrophe over Jerusalem, we all too plainly feel the narrowness, externalism and bigotry of the people, the pressing need of national repentance, and absolute unlikeness between the gospel of Jesus and the earthly selfish expectations of the Jews.

It was now December. Jesus had come into the neighborhood of Jerusalem, stopping in the little town of Bethany where he was entertained in the wealthy home of Martha and Mary, who had a brother Lazarus.

This household had more than heard of Jesus; he was deeply loved by the brother and sisters. He was more than guest to them; he was their intimate Friend, whose presence honored and hallowed their home. Indeed, Martha, in her anxious care to serve him, got distracted with the household work. Mary

the while, younger than Martha and used perhaps to her older sister's taking the responsibility in these matters, was sitting at Jesus' feet, forgetful of all care as hostess, absorbed in the conversation.

Martha stopped in the midst of her hurry and seeing Mary sitting idle, complained of her to Jesus. But Mary was not idle. No guest was ever more truly honored than Jesus by the unconscious abandonment of Mary, as she sat for hours that day, drinking in living truth as it fell. More like the affectionateness of a brother, the tenderness of a loving father, than the advice of a friend is the gentle rebuke of Jesus: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

It was but two miles from Bethany to Jerusalem, and Jesus left the home he loved to go thither.

This feast did not require one's presence in Jerusalem, for it could be observed in any part of the land; but it is in keeping with the open character of this last attempt to have the people know him as Messiah that he now goes publicly—even announced beforehand by his disciples—into the Holy City. The feast of Dedication commemorated the national deliverance by the Maccabees from the Syrians in 164 B. C., and it was especially significant that Jesus should now appear as a greater Deliverer than a Judas Maccabæus, from a greater oppression than that of the Syrians. Never in the history of Israel, since Moses was raised to lead the people from Egyptian bondage, had God left her hopeless and comfortless in the hour of darkness and need. A prophet or a prince

had always been sent with succor, and now, in the darkest hour, this period of greatest need in all her history, God had not abandoned his own; a Prince and a Prophet had come, last and greatest of all the line, to purify once more their Temple, to deliver them from the bondage of sin, to reign as their King forever in a kingdom of eternal righteousness. Would they accept him?

It was with this yearning hope that Jesus once again entered Jerusalem. But he was doomed to more than disappointment. It was a winter day, and as he walked in Solomon's Porch before the Beautiful Gate, the people flocked about him, holding him almost a prisoner in their midst while they craftily—for the sake of accusing him on the strength of his reply—asked him how much longer they were to be kept in suspense. If he were the Messiah, tell them so.

But he was aware of their purpose, and was patient even yet with their hypocrisy. Had not every word ever spoken by him been an indirect testimony to the truth of his Messiahship? But what they wanted was a direct testimony from his own lips on which they could accuse him; and this he would not give them. Not believing his words, would they believe his works? No, though they rose like mountains of truth about them, for they were not of his sheep. His sheep know and follow him; they shall never perish. He knows his sheep; he gives them eternal life, they shall not be snatched from his hand. Then in terms too plain to be misunderstood, too lofty in their clear consciousness of power and divinity ever to have been spoken by a sane and sober man, who was mere man, Jesus claims that he and the Father are One.

"Stone him!" screamed the mob, for to the Jews—

and to us—this was making himself equal with God. Yet they dared not cast a stone. His time was not come. They would have seized him then, but he escaped their fury and was gone from the hostile city.

Down by Jericho Jesus went, not halting to teach till he had crossed the Jordan at the fords of Bethabara and had the river once more between him and his enemies in Judæa. This Bethabara is the familiar scene of his baptism, and here he found many of John's old followers. "John did no sign," and the people, struck by the contrast between John and Jesus, believed now that the Messiah had come.

Four months remained before the Passover. Nearly half of this time Jesus spent in and about Bethabara, finally leaving to go back to Bethany.

One Sabbath noon, after having addressed the people in a synagogue, Jesus was asked to the festive noonday meal by the chief ruler, a Pharisee of high standing in the town.

It was a cunning trap, this Sabbath meal, into which the Pharisee himself stepped. A man sick with dropsy had been provided beforehand, and now, as by accident, he is brought forward to be healed. It is the Sabbath; will the great Rabbi break the Sabbath Law? Will he? We already know that under a like temptation, Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man"—to minister to his highest needs—and we are sure that even this manifest snare will not hinder him now in his gracious work. The man, healed, Jesus sent away from the storm to follow, and turned to the table of hypocrites. The mockery, insincerity, selfishness, and corruption of their show-religion was

laid clean and bare. Their boasted hospitality, their much-professed humility, were the veriest of shams.

As he spoke of the blessedness of genuine hospitality, of spreading a table for the needy who could render no recompense but gratitude, one of the Pharisees, in superlative self-complacency, thinking of the time when only the righteous Pharisees should sit at the table of the Messiah, interrupted blandly and provokingly: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." "That's how much we Pharisees believe in your kingdom of the ignorant and degraded, of sinners, publicans, and Gentiles," was the real import of this interruption. Then Jesus turned to him, and with that matchless parable of the great supper, showed how the Jews through all the Old Testament dispensation had been made aware by the prophets that a great feast was in preparation for them; how, now, it was ready—all spread—and by himself, by John and the disciples they were invited; how with one consent they were finding false excuses for not attending; and how as a consequence, not they, but the poor, maimed, blind, lame, from the streets and lanes, from even outside in the highways and hedges, were being pressed with invitations and were coming in.

Surrounded by eager, wondering multitudes and sought in private by anxious followers, these short winter days were devoted to the people and crowded with a constant succession of discourses and parables. He warned, exhorted, advised, cheered, and taught. Crowds flocked to his fellowship, but he told them over and over to count the cost, for to follow him meant to forsake all else; required a love that could hate the dearest opposition. Thus he chilled all sur-

face ardor and sifted the enthusiastic multitude that under the spell of his wonderful words clamored to join him. He had come with a gospel of peace and hope, not for the self-righteous few, but for the sinful, the lost many, and "the common people heard him gladly"; publicans and sinners, to whom no teacher before had ever brought a ray of hope, accepting his proffered mercy and greedily reaching for the promises of the kingdom of grace, up to this time withheld from them.

The Pharisees murmured; they were shocked, horrified, angered. That these darkened, hopeless, common people were worthy of salvation no Pharisee could believe. They were sinners, who could not repent; they had no souls to save. Jesus replied, to their horror, with that beautiful parable of the lost sheep, telling them, that though the sheep was lost, it was the Shepherd's and he cared for it, for all that; and would spare no labor to recover it. This he followed with the lost coin; that the owner will use every means and search till he find it; then closed the matchless teaching with that divinest parable of all, the lost son; that though the lost is willfully lost, yet the Father is always on the watch for his return; ready with kiss and ring and robe to reinstate him as a son, and with all the riches of his house to feed and welcome him. The Beloved Son only could have made this revelation of the loving Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The historical connection now is lost; indeed, the transcendent teaching so far eclipses the interests of time and place, that to seek the steps here would be like seeking the value of a brilliant gem by chemical test. He was all the time attended by immense

throngs; ceaselessly instructing, correcting, rebuking, encouraging both followers and Pharisees with those lofty parables, freighted with truth.

One day, when disciples and Pharisees were together about him, Jesus addressed, first, the disciples on the unrighteous use of life's riches, with the parable of the unjust steward; then the Pharisees on the same topic, with the parable of Dives and Lazarus—the lesson on using the gifts of God so they may eternally benefit us, and the warning to the contemptuous, selfish Pharisees to beware of using all life's wealth on themselves alone. Solemn were his words on forgiveness, power of faith, and our unprofitableness as servants—even after we have done our best.

But the flow of his words is interrupted, and we pause in awe to look upon the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

In the midst of this Peræan labor, came a messenger one day, in haste, with this urgent word from Bethany, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." That was all; but enough. Mary and Martha knew the love of Jesus need not be urged; no vehemence of demand was required; they could trust this simple message; it would tell him their sore need, their dependence and trust. Yet Jesus listened with strange quiet. He did not hurry. Saying this sickness was not unto death, but for God's glory, he seemed to dismiss the thought and tarried two days, finishing his work here—for he was never to return.

But Lazarus had died, died ere the carrier reached Jesus. Jesus knew it. He loved Lazarus. Yet he lingered? When ready, he said, "Let us go into Judæa again." Judæa, whence but a few weeks

before he had barely escaped with life? Astonished and dismayed, the band expostulated. But it was the Father's appointment, and they must learn now a lesson for the future: that the day set of God for his servant's work is "twelve hours" long—a full day not to be cut short till the sun sets upon the task accomplished.

To make the journey more reasonable he told them Lazarus was asleep and he was going to wake him; but they misunderstood and tried to dissuade him; and finding him firm, Thomas cried in despair, "If it must be, let us go and die with him."

When at last they drew near Bethany, Lazarus had been four days buried. Word of his coming reached the bereaved home before the arrival of Jesus, and Martha, true to her active nature, hastened out to meet him. It was all too late, yet, without complaint, reproach or lapse of love and trust she wept aloud in her anguish, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Her brother should rise from the dead, said the Master, if she would believe; but thinking the resurrection referred to the final rising, she took little comfort, for the "last day" was too far distant to touch the very present pain of this loving, grieving, common-sense sister.

Mary was called from her chamber of sorrow, and her greeting was the same wail of grief. Undone in their sorrow they found human sympathy in Jesus. His heart bled with theirs and with them he wept. His tears mingled with theirs and their friends; and falling, fell into the wide stream of human woe.

They led him to the garden-grave. All the friends in the house were gathered there and Jesus ordered the boulder rolled from the mouth of the tomb. He

had just said Lazarus should rise; Martha had replied, "I believe," but at this command she shrank. A dread misgiving, a nameless apprehension seized her. He must not; he might fail; corruption had begun and she stepped between him and the open grave: "No, no, Lord!"

"If thou canst believe," was the reminder of his gentle reproof. There was silence. Never more calm, more conscious of his majesty and power he stood, while awe crept into every stricken heart about the tomb. A prayer of thanksgiving broke the stillness; one loud call echoed through the sepulcher at their feet, through the halls of the realm of death, and Lazarus, in vestments of the grave, bound hand and foot with burial clothes, stood before them.

The effect of this miracle was that many believed and called him Lord, while others hurried away with the tremendous news to Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin was instantly convened, and, concluding that all men would believe on him were he unmolested, and that, were so unwarlike a man to lead a Messianic insurrection against Rome, he would meet with utter defeat to the ruin of Israel, the rulers then and there decreed him to death. They set about the plans immediately, but some one (was it Nicodemus?) warned Jesus, and he secretly escaped to Ephraim.

In the quiet seclusion of Ephraim, hidden from the searching Pharisees and the curious crowds, Jesus passed the few remaining weeks before the Passover in the society of the disciples. He dared not again take up the thread of public work, for he must not court death; his hour was soon to be, but not yet. His public work was practically done; the disciples needed

much instruction, and this last season of calm was doubtless devoted to their further preparation for the coming storm and the infinite task of continuing his work when he should be taken from them.

But the Passover was now at hand. The vast throngs of pilgrims were moving along the roads toward Jerusalem, and Jesus went out through Samaria to Galilee to join them. The hour has come.

The nation was in a ferment of excitement. Everybody wondered, watched, expected. Where was he? Would he appear now as heretofore, fearless and mighty in his calm majesty? Friends and foes felt some crisis approaching, and unusual numbers poured along the highways; for, if anywhere, Jesus would appear at the Passover. He had not advanced far from the retreat at Ephraim, ere his discovery was heralded abroad. The news of his coming ran before him; caravans in distant sections heard that he was on the road, and all pressed forward to see him at Jerusalem. Even the outcast lepers heard, so that at one point on the way, ten of the loathsome sufferers collected and called for pity and succor. Without formula or touch, by mere word of command, he sent them to the priest, and, so great was their faith that as they went they were healed. Nine were Jews, one was a Samaritan and he alone turned back and fell at Jesus' feet with thanks. The ten believed in his power; the one surrendered to his sway; and something more than a healed body was his when Jesus said, "Arise; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Many questions were put to Jesus, especially by the Pharisees, as he journeyed, and he halted many times, it seems, to address them and the disciples. His discourse upon the time and manner of the coming of

the Kingdom was spoken here, and those edged parables of the unjust judge, and the publican and Pharisee. It was a little later that he delivered himself concerning divorce, and, as if to further hallow the holy union, took into his arms and blessed the little children.

One morning as he was going forth by the way, a rich young man, a ruler in the synagogue, attracted, charmed, drawn by the purity and power of Jesus, ran, kneeling at his feet, and asked, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" An all-important question! He had kept the Law from his early youth; his own purity led him to Jesus. Looking into his sincere, open, enthusiastic countenance, the Master loved him, and because he loved him, told him what, unknown to himself, he still lacked: Part with all your riches and follow me! It required an outward act as well as an inward decision. The reply stunned him. The horror of poverty! it sounded like a knell. He staggered to his feet and "very sorrowful" turned home. The pity of Jesus went with him, and the disciples who had looked on, were warned of the overpowering influence of riches.

The disciple band were now nearing Judæa, had already perhaps crossed the Jordan, and Jesus told to their startled, but deaf ears the conflict and end so near. In the midst of this occurred an incident that must have pained and tried the Master unspeakably: Salome, the mother of James and John, the "Sons of Thunder," urged by these two sons, begged Jesus that they might have the two highest places in the Kingdom—to sit on his right and left hand. Was it possible, that the "beloved disciple," after three years,

and in this dark hour, on the way to suffering and death, was still so ignorant, selfish, ambitious and profanely earnest? Yet they were earnest; they loved, they believed with a faith sublime and literally they drank of his cup and were baptized with his baptism, but this picture of misunderstanding, jealousy, and ambition framed in the deep dark woe of the Saviour is all but beyond belief. "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all," was Christ's reply.

Jericho was in sight, and the townspeople were pouring out to meet the large caravan with which Jesus was coming. As he approached, two blind men by the way ceased begging alms and cried, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" The excited crowd would have hushed them as unworthy to address him who was already receiving the triumphal hosannas of a multitude; but Jesus heard the cry and calling blind Bartimæus to him sent him and his companion away praising God in the joy of sight restored. Do we wonder that a mighty shout went up from the onlooking throng?

Strangely enough, Jericho was the home of large numbers of priests and publicans—extreme opposites and haters of each other. Naturally one would expect to see Jesus taken to lodge by one of these descendants of Aaron, but not so; a publican was to receive him. Zacchæus was a Jew, and a chief publican (doubly despised), and in his curiosity to get a glimpse of this mighty Teacher and Wonderworker, he climbed into a low fig tree that overhung the road, for he was short of stature.

What a thrill wakened his heart as he now saw the Great Prophet, the avowed Messiah, approaching! He

is beneath the tree; he stops, he looks up, his eyes meet the publican's.

"Zacchæus," he says, kindly, "make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

He had seen and heard, and now—more than he had dared hope—Jesus would sup and abide with him, as his Messiah and Lord! He descended joyfully. But the multitude murmured. The Messiah to eat with a publican! The Son of David, to step from a believing, excited host into the house of a traitor, a sinner! There was an instant revulsion of feeling akin to horror.

But Zacchæus felt the honor, and to make himself worthy as possible, he then and there, publicly, vowed his penitence and renounced his past life and ill-gotten gain; and the Lord brought salvation that day to the house of the humble, believing publican—for he too—spiritually—"was a son of Abraham."

Here Jesus stayed overnight, and after speaking to the multitude the parable of the pounds, he once more began his march forward and rested that Friday evening, March 31, at Bethany, where the Sabbath was spent in quiet.

CHAPTER XVI

Passion Week

IT was Friday, and the shadows of the Sabbath were falling from Olivet over Bethany as Jesus entered the village. Martha's home received him in reverence, sympathy and love, which, as far as an earthly home could honor him, satisfied the human longing of his lonely heart. For days an ever-growing multitude had followed him with hosannas. Jesus needed Sabbath rest, solitude, and prayer. Bethany was wildly excited: Jesus, come as the Messiah, was with them; they would honor him. A supper (the Sabbath festal meal) was publicly prepared in the house of one Simon, whom Jesus had cured of leprosy. This supper, in accord with his purpose now to declare himself King and Messiah, Jesus attended.

Martha supervised and Mary and Lazarus were among the guests. This public meal indeed was honor, but not honor meet for Mary's Lord. Clearer, deeper into the heart of her Master she saw than any other mentioned in the Gospels. She had sat at his feet, in eager sympathy, her quickened woman's insight divining the meaning of his sad, ominous words, and now, almost sharing in the mystery of his coming death. She, as none beside, knew how near the end was, and she alone had prepared for it. All that her love could do should be done to honor him. And where better than at this feast? While the shallow, mistaken crowd, with shout and show, magnified his

name, she expressed her love by an act that would remain for all time.

In the midst of the meal, before every eye, Mary came quietly up behind her Lord, broke an alabaster box of pure spikenard—a pound of the precious nard—and poured it over his head; then, kneeling in loving worship, she poured it upon his feet; and bending lower, this refined, respected woman, in the beautiful abandonment of her devoted service and fellowship—virtually sharing by this in his death—loosed her hair and with it wiped her Saviour's feet. None could do more. "And the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

Picture the crowd's storm of acclamation, excitement, wonder, and mistaken hope in contrast with this love! And how its white light deepens the black shadow of Judas, who watched with greedy, angry eyes, and asked why this waste with so many needy poor! Mary knew she was not guilty, that she had robbed no one, for there could be no such thing as *waste* in spending upon Christ. In giving to him she gave to the poor, whom he then and there committed forever to his followers' care. But so precious was this deed of love and self-forgetful devotion, that, in the future, Jesus said, wherever the gospel is preached the story shall be told for a memorial to her.

How great the excitement over Jesus was the event of the next day well indicates. As the bright spring morning broke, two of the disciples brought an ass's colt from Bethphage (a little mountain hamlet or suburb of Jerusalem). Jesus, seated upon the colt and followed by a throng of pilgrims, who had flocked to

Bethany on his arrival to see him and Lazarus, started for Jerusalem.

Word of his coming sped through the city and another multitude poured forth to meet him on the way. The two processions came in sight as the caravan with Jesus was sweeping up the long slope, and a shout of welcome was echoed one to the other. Palm branches were waved, cloaks and robes were scattered upon the road as the processions met, when all turned toward the city.

As they rounded the ridge and Jerusalem first came into view, the excitement broke forth afresh, and hosannas to the Son of David rolled down the valley and were heard in the city streets.

Among the number were some Pharisees. At this triumphal acclamation, this royal homage, they burned with rage. But they were impotent; nothing could check this tide; and they turned with exclamations of chagrin to one another. All this in spite of their decree, their efforts to poison his teaching and intimidate his followers! He must not be allowed thus to enter Jerusalem; to ride amid this joyous believing multitude as Messiah into the very Temple. Desperate with rage in their powerlessness, they actually appealed to Jesus himself to quell this exultation. The face of the Master, hitherto impassive and shaded, lighted with a gleam of righteous wrath, and pointing to the rocks he said that if the people held their peace, the very stones would cry out.

The procession moved on. Soon again they turned a shoulder of the mountain, and now Jerusalem, with its ascending terraces, its magnificent palaces, its Temple, its marble towers and golden spires, burst full upon them. Wrapped in morning light the

glorious city stood, indeed, like a bride adorned for her husband. That "mass of gold and snow," incomparably beautiful, brought the movement to an instant halt. For a moment the splendor of the sight stilled every shout. Then was heard a groan. As Jesus gazed, the vision of the desolation to come settled like night over the radiant city, and pity and sorrow broke from his pent-up heart in bitter lament.

With these words of woe and anguish he was swept on into the wondering city, even into the Temple gates, while the people asked, "Who is this?" and the pilgrim bands answered with a shout, "This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Jesus spent that night very unlike a royal sovereign: He shortly disappeared from the crowd and returned to Bethany for prayer. Approaching Jerusalem again in the morning (Monday), he hungered, and seeking fruit on a green-leafed fig, found none. Luxuriantly leafed, full of promise, but barren! How like Israel with its rich religious show and sterile spirit! He had sought fruit of the nation in vain, and, as yesterday he pronounced doom upon the nation, so to-day he cursed this barren tree, the symbol of barren Israel.

Yesterday he had accepted homage as King, and now acts with kingly authority. He once more purges the Temple of those corrupt traffickers who made his Father's House a den of robbers. Not a priest nor Pharisee dare oppose, while the people surging exultantly about him, eager to hear and acclaim, brought their sick, and while the children were continually crying Hosannah, to the chagrin of the rulers.

With the dawn of Tuesday Jesus came to the

Temple, intent upon his last day of public teaching—the longest, fullest, profoundest day of his ministry. With the setting sun the last warning had been given, the last appeal made, and Jesus had left the Temple to return no more, and—the door between him and Israel was shut forever. It was a day crowded with temptations, discourses, parables, events; a day whose every minute was charged with solemn, momentous truth. Jesus meets the crisis and stands forth against this day's dark horizon as Master.

On the outward way they again passed the cursed fig tree. It looked as if the blast of a furnace had smitten it. The disciples were astonished at the miracle—at the power, still, rather than the significance. Jesus paused, pointed out the analogy to Israel.

Courage had returned to the enemies of Jesus. The members of the Sanhedrin had been much in council, and had prepared a new set of questions, quite different from those earlier ones of the priests, whom, when trying to break his influence by challenging his authority, he had put to confusion. Now the Pharisees, uniting with their hated rivals, the Herodians (so determined was the attempt to ruin him!), sprung their deepest laid, deadliest trap.

He would not suspect, they argued, the Herodians of evil design, and the more surely to deceive him, the Pharisees sent their young pupils—versed in hypocrisy—to ask, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" Innocent enough on the surface, that was the most ingenious and dangerous question with which they could tempt him.

"Yes" would alienate every believing Jew in the land; "No" would bring the speedy and fatal wrath of

Rome upon him. They fawn and call him Rabbi, wise, just, and fearless. But they ring false. "Why tempt ye me, ye *hypocrites!* Bring me a coin."

Stinging under the lash, they hurried out and fetched a Roman denarius, stamped with the haughty features of Tiberius.

"Whose image and superscription is this?"

"Cæsar's," they reply.

"Then give back to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," was the Master's answer.

Caught in their own net! Condemned by their own knavery! But this was not all; a far weightier duty was enjoined when Jesus added—"and to God the things that are God's."

As masterfully as he met these two temptations, did he later vanquish the Sadducees in their endeavor to ridicule him with the question on the resurrection which even pleased the Pharisees, who murmured their approval. Unprepared for his wisdom, when a scribe again tried to trip him with, "Which is the great commandment?" the answer of Jesus, "Love to God is the first great commandment, love to man, the second, equal to the first in greatness," gave his enemies Scripture measure.

These bouts occurred throughout the day at intervals between his talks and parables. Dark and weighted with love and warning are the words of these last hours with the people. The parables are all prophetic—pictures of the gloom into which the sun of this favored nation is fast going down. It will burst blood-red against the sky ere it sinks forever into night's oblivion, his death the first flaming tongue darting through the gathering clouds.

The parable of the "Yes" and "No" of the two sons

was a telling illustration of his hard saying to the Pharisees: that the publicans and harlots would enter before themselves into the Kingdom. They could not mistake the rude, curt son who first said "No," but repented and went to work, as the sinner who now accepted Jesus; nor the second oily-tongued son who glibly promised and as readily neglected his promise, as the type of their own hypocritical selves.

These were true pictures of the nation, and as he held the mirror before them again in the parables of the evil husbandman, the marriage of the king's son, and the wedding garment, they saw, but instantly forgot, what manner of people they were; forgot too the fate of those who neglect the repeated invitation.

Like a momentary rift in a stormy sky letting in a cheery flood of light is the sketch of the poor widow with her two mites; and the tender, comforting lesson of Jesus: that it is not how much of the gift, but how much of the giver is given, that counts with God, who "will have mercy and not sacrifice."

The day wore away. The lifework of Jesus, all but done, was not to end without promise, a token of its universal sway over the hearts of men in the time to come. There were some Greeks in the Temple, converts to Judaism, who had been listening and had believed, and now came seeking fellowship with Jesus in a private interview. As he looked upon these—first fruits of the Gentile harvest to be gathered from every field of earth—he knew the hour of his glorification had begun to strike and that these were the first for whom he should die.

Calmed and satisfied, he turned for his last warning and appeal to the people. Many times he had exposed the sin and hypocrisy of the rulers and Pharisees, but

in this last solemn hour the fierce storm of his holy wrath is loosed against them, and eight times over he pronounces woe.

His last words could not be words of woe. He had come to bring a God of love to us; and his final word must be a witness to his mission, an appeal and a testimony for all time, with his parting word, that whosoever sees and believes him sees and believes God; and whosoever rejects him rejects God and the words of eternal life that God the Father hath spoken through him, his Son. As the Temple gates closed and the twilight began to cover Jerusalem, looking back upon the house he had left forever desolate, he wept.

His mission to Israel is done. He turned again and again as the road wound through the valley, and drawing the silent, frightened disciples close to him, sat down upon Olivet in sight of Jerusalem and talked to them under the stars. Talked of the end; of his near end; the city's; and the end of the present times, when no longer Israel, but the whole world of men were to be the "chosen of the Lord." And here in the peaceful starlight, with the parables of the ten virgins and the talents, he warned and exhorted them; lifting their hopes, cheering and cautioning them against the last great day—the Judgment—for which they should always watch and be ever ready.

Wednesday Jesus did not return to Jerusalem. Not even the children would have welcomed him. He is rejected. The world that was going after him has turned. A few in Bethany love, shield, blindly understand; beside these there are none. His public work is

finished; the effort, the strain, the hope past. Body and mind feel the defeat. Gloom of night is fallen. The final, the death struggle is begun. The record of labor and sorrow of the years is written in his face in lines of pain. He is silent with the grief that no one can share.

He cannot throw off the load of woe. Unable to bear the silent suffering of Mary and Lazarus and his loving, sorrowful mother, whom Mary had taken to her heart, Jesus gathered the disciples and departed, the women watching them disappear within the shade of the olive groves.

With faces blanched with dread, mazed and pitiable, the Twelve clung close to the Master. One's face only was dark. A scowl had long been growing into the forehead of Judas. He sat apart. He counted money in a bag. He glanced furtively away toward Jerusalem.

"After two days is the feast . . . and I am betrayed to be crucified," Jesus was saying. A spasm caught the man apart. A gleam of craft darted from his eyes to the Master. He rose and was gone.

Gone to buy the lamb for the feast, thought the eleven. He was; and to sell something too. See him hurry like one pursued! Through the gate, along the streets, into the court of the high priest! The Sanhedrin is in secret and unlawful council. Their hating faces lighten as the curtains part and Judas stands before them. They stare incredulous. They listen while he bargains. Thirty pieces of silver clink to the bottom of the bag. Christ is sold for the price of a slave!

CHAPTER XVII

The Court: The Cross: The Crown

FAREWELL had been taken of his mother and the friends in Bethany. As the face of her Son was lost to sight, the sword that had so often pierced her heart again cut sharp and deep. Back to the quiet days at Nazareth, to the Temple scenes, to the stable in Bethlehem, to that angel visitor years ago, Mary went; and slowly, through the maze of years, through the denser maze of events, retraced his life, and still pondered.

On a silent height in Olivet, with his face turned westward, stood Jesus. He was gazing, rapt, upon the sunset. The rim of the burning disk dropped slowly to the sea behind Carmel. The light flamed and spread and quivered; gleamed red and rose and pearl; faded; and the day died into twilight, dusk and dark. Three stars could soon be counted; and Thursday evening, the hour for the Pascal supper, had come. . . .

Through the gay and noisy streets of Jerusalem Peter and John were walking rapidly, looking for a man the Master said they should find, carrying a pitcher. There he is. They followed. As he turned into the court of a large house, Peter touched him lightly from behind and said, "The Master desires to eat the Passover to-night in the hall of your house."

It was the house of Mark's father. That simple request was sufficient. Nay, not that even, was re-

quired. They had asked for the hall, or stable, and now they are led, wondering, up the outside stair to the Upper Room, where a table is set, with cups and wine, unleavened bread, bitter herbs and the dish of vinegar—prepared with all but the sacrificial lamb.

Judas had bought the lamb the day before, and at half past one, as the blast of the silver trumpet proclaimed the hour of sacrifice, Peter and John stood before the great altar with their lamb. Soon they came, bearing it upon their shoulders, flayed and dressed, ready to be roasted for the supper.

The Pascal moon hung pale above the snowy Temple, as Jesus, with the ten disciples—Judas among them—wended his way down the mountain and passed into the city. He and his were all together to eat the sacrament that shall be a memory and a bond of union to them forever.

It was dark without. The door was shut. They were alone. Around the long, narrow table were couches, ranged like a horseshoe, leaving one end free. As Jesus was taking his place, there was an angry word, a struggle; and Judas threw himself into the seat of honor, beside Jesus, above him at his left. Peter caught the look upon his Master's face and in a burst of shame flung himself into the very lowest seat at the opposite end. John was opposite Peter, next to Jesus, at his right, according to Edersheim's reckoning.

In painful silence the meal began. No one dared look upon that white face, drawn and shadowed. All knew the cause of the new pain come there. Thanks was offered, the cup passed; and Jesus, as the head of the company, rose according to custom, to "wash hands." But what is this! The disciples looked in astonishment. He has put off his upper garments;

girt himself with a towel; poured water into a basin; and kneels—their Lord!—like a slave, to wash Peter's feet!

But never so much their Lord as now! Peter flushed scarlet; his breath came in gasps; he shrank. "No, never, Lord!"

"You shall know why some time, Peter. Unless I wash your feet you have no part with me." Utterly crushed, Peter yielded, begging, in his overflowing grief and shame, to be washed wholly. None resisted after that. From one to another he went, bending low over the feet of Judas, tenderly, lovingly, sadly.

"Now ye are clean, but not all"—not Judas. How the smallness, the meanness of their jealousy and ambition scorched their hearts! The meal went on, while this lesson of humility and servitude he solemnly drove home; warning them of many things and speaking words of woe they could not understand. They seemed suddenly to stand before him, in all their ignorance, weakness, and sin. Their dullness and ingratitude; the bitterness, the betrayal of Judas; the shame and needlessness of his death—all swept over him; and he was stricken. Loneliness and sorrow, loosed from their black caves, rushed through his mind. He groaned aloud, "One of you shall betray me!"

A chill, a nameless fear of self, crept like a numbing poison around the table, as each one faltered, "Lord, is it I?"

No answer. Was it given, this moment's silence, in hope that Judas might yet repent?

Peter beckoned to John, and leaning till his head rested upon the Saviour's breast, the beloved disciple whispered, "Who is it, Lord?" John alone heard the

answer. But aloud he pronounced woe immeasurable upon the betrayer. Judas sat unmoved. His cynical, defiant smile intensified. He leaned and hoarsely, shamelessly whispered, "Rabbi, is it I?"

"Thou hast said. Do it quickly."

The simple disciples thought Judas sent upon an errand, as he rose and shut himself out into the night. A weight lifted from Jesus, and as the meal drew to a close, he took the bread, blessed and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body;" and the cup, having given thanks, he handed them, saying: "This is my blood of the New Testament, shed for many. Eat and drink. Do this, as oft as ye do it, in remembrance of me."

Beautiful, full of consolation were the words with which he now addressed the disciples. The loving heart, teaching, forgiving, blessing, drew them and lifted them to the Father in solemn, priestly prayer.

The Supper was finished. Chanting the hymn, they left the chamber and descended into the hollow streets.

Midnight slept in the valley as they crossed the swirling Kedron. The moon rode swift through the cloud-driven skies. Dark shadows crept beneath the trees, crouching and gliding along the path like things alive. The wild spell of the spring night fell upon the disciples. The unbroken silences, the unlighted shadows seized them. Awe and fear came. Courage fled.

The Master was as silent as the night; and bowed. They dared not speak. Yonder was Gethsemane, where many hours had been spent in prayer and vigil. There the shadows had gathered thick and black. Not a gnarled, fantastic bole of the ancient trees

showed in the impenetrable gloom. Thither they turned. He said sorrowfully, warning them: "You will all desert me this night. Peter will deny me thrice." Peter's violent protests were smothered in the garden's heavy dark.

They had crossed the threshold of Gethsemane. The disciples faltered. They dared not face the struggle they felt approaching. He would not have them; it would but pain, confuse and terrify them. The infinite Father alone could understand; could help and share.

"Stay here while I go there and pray," he said.

But he would not go altogether alone. He called Peter, James, and John to come with him deeper into the silent garden. These had witnessed his glory on Hermon; they should share this also.

The eight threw themselves wearily upon the grass in the edge of the moonlight; Jesus and the three penetrated the dense trees. As the darkness swallowed him, he groaned, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death."

The storm had come. He could no longer withstand it. The gathering fury of ignorance, of ingratitude, of insult, of persecution, of hate burst full upon him. Long he had met it; now he bent before it in defeat. Alone! He must be alone!

"Stay here and watch with me," he pleaded, and was gone.

A ray of mellow light fell through the roof of leaves upon a prostrate form. A cloud blotted out the light, and from the gloom came sounds of agony.

The three sank upon the earth, worn with days of activity and long nights of vigil; spent with excitement, confused, and numbed with trouble and pain.

"Father, Father, all things are possible with thee, take this cup from me," they heard him pray. Then to them came sleep. "This cup!" He was draining the cup of sacrifice for sin. The garden is dark, the sounds of agony muffled to the three. He conquered. "Father, let it pass from me! But not as I wish. As thou wilt."

It was still—as ever—the struggle to obey, to submit. Was there not another way to fulfill his mission, to save the world from sin, than this way—by the cross? His life flashed before him as the clouds drove across the moon. The infinite hope, the mighty effort, was it not all failure? Had he even redeemed three? He hurried back in fear to find them. They slumbered! He stood above them. Was his work to be left in the keeping of such as these? "Father! Father!"

Peter awoke! He sprang dazed and shamed to his feet. He saw great drops of sweat upon the face of Jesus.

His heart aches with the pathos of the need for the tender, loving, forgiving rebuke. He left them again for a struggle, intenser than before. If the disciples would only wake! If they could show some realization of the task falling upon them, some fitness for it! He stole back to them again. They slept heavily. Sadly retreating now, he bowed and prayed once more, calmly, peacefully: "Father, not as I wish, . . . as thou wilt!"

All was still in the garden. Suddenly the clouds parted; soft light poured over the grove, through the stirless branches and over his bended head. The storm is spent. He returned to the sleeping disciples—Victor. He is Master.

Yonder in the distance, descending from the city, flashes a torch. Trampling feet are echoed from the valley. He woke the disciples: "Rise, let us be going; he that betrayeth me is at hand." Scarcely were the words uttered when a din of noises startled Gethsemane, and a mob of priests, soldiers, and rabble, armed and bearing torches, swarmed into the garden, Judas leading.

Pushing by the eight disciples, the man of Kerioth led the band on till the flaring light revealed a figure, tall, unarmed, pale and calm. Three others were behind him. Judas sprang forward, threw his arms about Jesus, calling, "Hail, Master!"—and *kissed* him.

Jesus recoiled. "Betrayest thou me with a kiss?" He asked. Judas fell back and slunk among the on-rushing mob. They had surrounded the spot when Jesus stepped calmly forth into the glaring light.

"Whom seek ye?" he asked.

"Jesus of Nazareth," was their weak, uncertain answer.

"I am he." The words, the manner, the man, shook them. Awed, they fell back. "I am he," he reiterated. "If ye seek me, let these disciples go."

The spell was broken. They seized him, but not until Peter's sword had flashed and one fell maimed. Always the same Peter! Instantly there was clash of arms.

Jesus' voice rose—and all was calm. "Put up your sword, Peter. Are not all the angels at my command?"

Peter looked. Not another disciple in sight! They were binding his Master. He dropped the sword, and he too fled, while Jesus was pushed by his captors toward the city.

Only the tramp of Roman sentries was heard in the sleeping streets, as the band, with smothered torches, hurried silently toward the house of the high priest. Annas was ex-priest—Caiaphas, his son-in-law, held the office—but the old gray-bearded judge was the real power, cold, crafty, unscrupulous. He had no *voice* in this trial. None. In his long robes, and long years, he stood and gazed coolly upon the young Prisoner. Hate smoldered in his hard face, his glittering eyes. With a gesture, he turned his victim over to Caiaphas. That was death sentence.

The swift, illegal, mock trial began. The brusque, hot-headed high priest plunged desperately into the irregular business. The court was guarded, but John had slipped in, and, as Jesus felt the presence of the beloved disciple, he turned, and something rarer than a smile lighted his wan face.

Caiaphas and his bench could make no headway. Jesus was strangely, majestically silent. He spoke once, sending them to the world for witnesses; for all he had done had been done openly. With that, someone standing near struck him in the face. John saw it, and hung his head. The dawn was breaking. They had gotten nowhere. Witnesses were sought, but there was no semblance of truth in their testimony. There he stood, still silent, calm; they, impotent and confounded. Thwarted! He *their* judge! *They* the condemned! Would he yet escape?

Maddened and fearful, Caiaphas strode from his seat close to Jesus and shrieked: "Answerest thou nothing? I adjure thee by the living God! tell me whether *thou art the Christ, the Son of God!*"

What a question by that man! in that place! for that reason! Jesus could not be silent to that adjura-

tion. "I am," was the answer. It was the seal, self-placed, to doom; the calm declaration of his divinity.

"Blasphemy!" hissed the judge, rending his robe from collar to hem. "He is guilty of death!" cried the jury with one voice.

The dawn shuddered, cold and white, along the east. Peter warmed himself at a brazier in the court, miserable, tormented. He was jeered and jostled. Twice he had denied his Master. "I tell you I know not the Man!" he repeated, vehemently, for a third time, and backed it with an oath. Then far away, but clear in the dawn's hush, crowed a wakeful cock. Peter started. Jesus was being led by. At the familiar voice, hoarse and unnatural with fright and curses, he turned. Their eyes met. With a convulsion the disciple, stricken, drew his cloak about his head, rushed from the court—"and wept bitterly."

By him brushed another cloaked figure, rushing in. Judas burst into the hall, wild, despairing, frenzied. The priests spurned him. "I have sinned!" he screamed, "I have betrayed innocent blood," and the burning pieces of silver rang and rolled across the paved floor. . . . They were gathered and spent for a potter's field; for they were blood money. . . . Judas was found at the bottom of a gorge, mangled, dead. A rope and a broken limb were fast to his neck.

Rome kept for her own the power of life and death. Full day, wide and bright, had come. It was about seven o'clock. The Sanhedrin led the condemned Christ to the palace of Pilate for an order of execution. He met them reluctantly at the porch; for these pious priests would not pollute themselves by entering the Gentiles' hall.

It is a fierce, swift tragedy to the end. Though

personally indifferent, Pilate was still a Roman, with a Roman's love of fair play; and he tried and failed, as much as a man could, to give Jesus the rights of the law. His interest was immediately awakened by this striking Man. To his question: "What against him?" they could only answer with a flood of oaths and lies, accusing him of teaching false doctrines, forbidding payment of tribute, and claiming to be King.

It was an ugly throng, bent on blood. Pilate loathed every Jew of them, and feared them as much. He took Jesus within, questioned him, listened in something akin to awe at his words, and came out, declaring emphatically: "I find in him no fault at all."

It was an acquittal, and maddened the mob the more. The storm of insult and invective broke forth afresh. What is this about Galilee he hears? Is the prisoner a Galilean? Then take him to Herod Antipas. And mightily relieved to be rid of the dangerous case, Pilate sent them to the tetrarch.

Herod was spending Passover week in Jerusalem. The stories of this Nazarene had been coming to him for months. He was eager to see Jesus. Small satisfaction the sight gave him, since before him, stained with the blood of the Baptist, Jesus' lips were sealed. His court made sorry sport with the bound and dumb Christ; and, dressing him in mock purple, Herod sent him back to Pilate. Another acquittal!

Eternal destinies were forced upon Pilate; his hour had come. He mounted the tribunal. Before him stood Christ. He wished to save him. About him surged the angry crowd, desperate, thirsting for blood. He feared them and wavered. Then came a message from Claudia, his wife: "Beware! This Man is just!"

He trembled. Ah! A happy thought—a plan at

least worth trying! "It is your custom to release one condemned criminal this holy week. Shall I release your King?"

"Loose Bar-Abbas"—the murderer!—they cried.

"What shall I do with your King?"

"Crucify him," was the cry.

Three hours they had waited. The clamor rose threateningly. Suddenly Pilate reappeared on the porch. There fell a hush. Behind him stood a tall form, but bowed and bare. He was bound. A band of twisted thorns had been forced brutally around his brow, and thick drops of blood stained his deathly pale face. His back was purple; blood trickled from deep gashes made by the scourge. His flesh quivered with the fresh torture. He was calm. Pilate turned. The sight transfixed him. He looked, and in awestruck tones exclaimed, "*Behold the Man!*"

But louder and fiercer rose the yell, "Crucify him!"

Pilate and his Victim disappeared again. He would save him. Again they reappeared, and again was heard only the cry, "Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your King?"

"We have no King but Cæsar!"

Lost! A silver vessel glistened in the morning light before the throng. It was a basin; and, dipping his trembling fingers in the water, Pilate said, "I am innocent of this Man's blood!" whereat Israel burst into a shriek: "His blood be on us and on our children!"

Let us hurry. Nine o'clock. Thousands swelled the priestly mob to a vast multitude. It was Passover holiday, and as the Sanhedrists led the way to Golgotha, the whole city fell into line, curious, insulting, inhuman. Every eye was fixed upon a pallid, blood-

stained face, a trembling, tottering form, bearing a heavy cross. The place of execution was close to the city, but before the hill was reached the body sank beneath its load.

The sight sickened the women in the throng. This Man! What had he not done for them! They thought of the priceless blessings he had brought them, and they wept aloud. He spoke, forgetful of himself, trying to calm and bless them. Seizing a stranger coming into the city, the soldiers made him carry the cross, and the procession moved on.

He was stretched upon the awful beams. Some one pressed a cup to his lips. The nails had not been driven yet. Even that brutal era could not put a human being to this utmost of torture without one touch of compassion. There was an association of women in Jerusalem, who, at their own expense, provided a draught of powerful opiate for the condemned to ease their pain. Jesus tasted this, then closed his lips. He would meet death clear in mind; he would conquer to the uttermost.

The dull sound of a mallet was heard. That was all. No. Those standing close saw the white lips quiver and heard him pray: "Father, forgive them!" . . . Minutes dragged like hours by; hours like eternities. The crowd looked on and jeered. They cursed, taunted, mocked and vented their still unsated fury upon him.

Over his head, in three languages, that all might read, was Pilate's revenge upon the Jews—and Pilate's tribute to the Christ—"The King of the Jews." He refused to alter a word. Thwarted in their very hour of triumph, the priests surged about the noble Sufferer; but he was mute.

Two thieves, one on either side, were dying with him. One called for help. Jesus was heard to speak consolingly to him. It was high noon, but it was growing dark. There was an unearthly quiet in the air. Christ looked out over the hill. Yonder was Jerusalem; far away was Galilee, and Nazareth. Darkness was blurring Jerusalem. The soldiers had ceased gambling at his feet. Someone was drawing near—his mother and the beloved disciple! "Woman," he called with dying tenderness, "behold thy Son!" And to John, "Behold thy mother!"

She covered her face. John mercifully led her away. Darkness deepened. The hill was almost deserted. The priests, the people had crept back to the city. The awful, unnatural night darkened. Alone he hung. A cry broke from his lips. One groan of physical anguish! Some bystander, in pity, put a sponge to his lips.

"Father," he said, "into thy hands I commend my Spirit," and lifting his head he cried victoriously, "*It is finished!*" and died.

A shudder filled the earth. Men fell upon their faces, beating their breasts. The stones cried out. Graves yawned. In the Temple the priests had gathered, huddled in confusion and abject terror. Look! Their eyeballs started; an invisible hand caught the great veil before the Holy of Holies and rent it from top to bottom.

At the foot of the cross a Roman soldier raised his head and murmured, "Surely, this Man was the Son of God."

With sunset came the Sabbath. It must not be polluted by these hanging corpses. A soldier came

with mallet to break the Victim's legs and hasten death; but death had come to him. So soon? His mallet dropped; he grasped his long spear and drove it deep into the left side of the lifeless body.

Darkness had lifted. The Sabbath was near. Joseph of Arimathæa, one of the Sanhedrin, but blameless, begged the body of the Lord, and hastily wrapping it in linen and spices (brought by Nicodemus), laid it in a new tomb, hollowed from the rock in his garden close by. Mary Magdalene and another Mary watched sadly from a distance. The stone was rolled to the mouth of the grave. Long shadows sped eastward. . . . and it was the Paschal Sabbath.

Rayless, hopeless Sabbath to the followers of Jesus! He was dead and his cause was buried with him in the tomb. He was betrayed by one, denied by another, forsaken by all the Twelve. John, indeed, had lingered near the cross, hoping to the last that he would assert his power and come down. Vain! He was dead. Their hope and faith were dead. He would rise, he had said, but it meant nothing to them. There was no faintest dream of a real resurrection in their clouded, heavy hearts that day. Even the loving women were sadly preparing more spices for the embalming to-morrow, when he should be laid forever from their sight. A glorious dream, unreal! A divine hope, unfounded! An infinite mistake, disappointment, delusion!

To humor the fears and superstitions of the Jews, Pilate set a guard of soldiers over the tomb and sealed the stone.

It was near the dawn of Sunday, the first day of the week. The two soldiers watched sleepily before the silent tomb. The birds were waking. The breath of

the unfolding flowers filled the garden air. A silver arrow flew heavenward, cleaving the purple east; a wave of opal quivered low along the hills and dashed upward in shimmering spray; a tongue of gold, a sheet of flame burst high, swept far and wide against the hollow blue, and the world's first Easter day had dawned.

What was that! The guards turned toward the tomb. They stared. The clay seal had broken! The stone was rolling back! A light from the tomb! They fell, overcome with terror.

Through the dew and early dawn Mary Magdalene came with spices to the garden. The stone! it had rolled away! She turned and in dismay and dread fled to the abode of Peter and John. Meantime other devoted women came and were met by two shining forms that spoke to them. Awed and amazed, they hastened with the message to the disciples. It seemed incredible. At Mary's word, Peter and John hurried out, John outran Peter and stood looking into the empty tomb; but Peter pushed by him and rushed within. Empty! There lay the linen clothes neatly folded. And as they looked, slowly, dimly, surely the truth began to dawn. Not stolen! *Risen!* Then, for the first time and forever, *they believed.*

But no one had seen Him. Mary returned to the tomb. She could not be consoled. "They have taken away my Lord," she wailed. A shadow fell over her. "The gardener," she thought. "Oh, sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where, and I will take him!" her heart-broken plea.

"Mary!" said a tender, thrilling, familiar voice.

Like a flash she fell at his feet, sobbing, "Oh, my Master!"

A few tender, comforting words he said; and she hastened away, declaring, "I have seen the Lord."

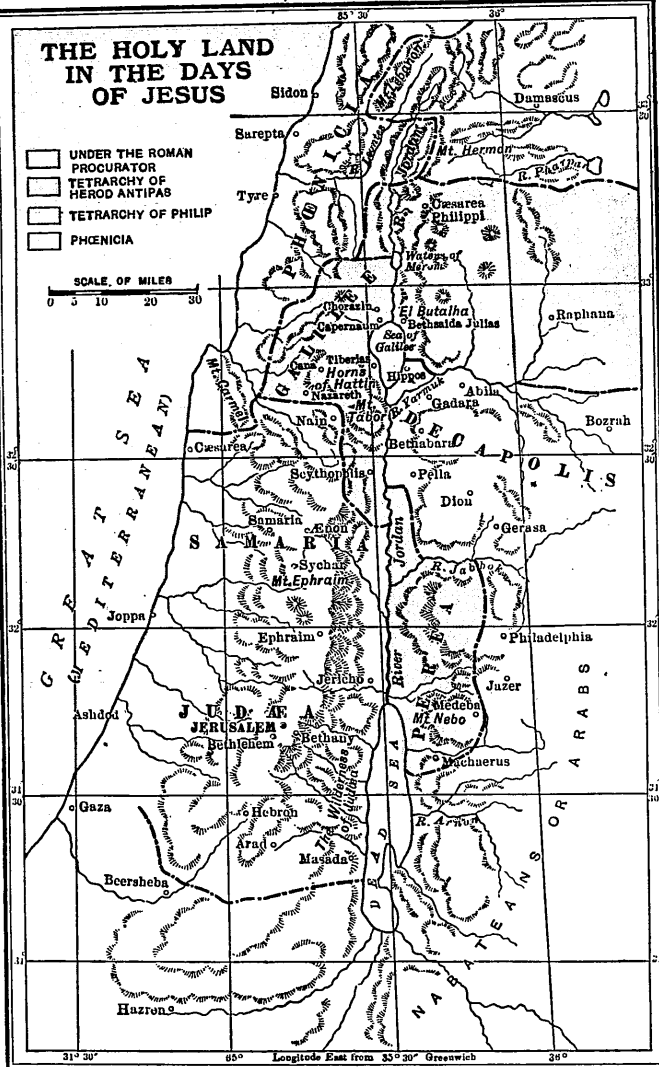
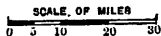
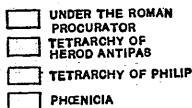
He had risen indeed! To Mary, to the other women, to Peter, to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, in the Upper Room, at the Sea of Galilee, and at one place to more than five hundred believers, gathered by the disciples for worship, he appeared. Forty days in his glorified body he walked and talked with them, till even Thomas, slowest, most doubting of all, touched him with his hand and cried, "My Lord and my God!"

The forty days passed. Strange, holy days! Once more the Twelve are in Jerusalem. He is with them. They are going forth toward Bethany. They ask when the Kingdom shall be restored to Israel. They may not ask. They are to work, to bear witness of him in all the world. He lifts his hands in blessing—ever in blessing—and is parted from them; rising, wrapped in luminous clouds—he is gone.

And they returned to Jerusalem in deep joy.

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THE HOLY LAND IN THE DAYS OF JESUS



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